RHETORIC OF RESISTANCE: SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE WORK OF WOLLSTONECRAFT, CUGOANO, AND GODWIN

By

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This dissertation examines the rhetoric employed by Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin who devise a top-down/bottom-up dialectic of social-justice writing which can be read as grassroots advocacy. The authors write with two constant goals in mind: from the top down, they decry systemic forms of injustice; and from the bottom up, they make the experiences of victims visible. Scholarship on *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman, Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery*, and *Things as They are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams*, has often focused on assessing the degree to which each text concerns itself with democratic equal rights. By contrast, this project explicates how the writers collectively define social injustice for the late eighteenth century. The writers simultaneously voice their indignation against those moral and socio-economic wrongs; deconstruct assumptions of natural inferiority and social disrespect; demand extensive change to social foundations; assert the humanity of women, workers, and slaves; and empathize with other oppressed populations across their traditionally conceived genres of vindication, slave narrative, and novel.

Ultimately, my work incorporates a lexicon of political philosophy, political theory, and grassroots advocacy into literary studies to show how Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin not only recognize corresponding patterns of oppression but also utilize strikingly similar literary devices and rhetorical strategies by which to combat injustice. All three authors share the same fundamental aim— to transform the dismal existence of the oppressed groups they represent.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

READING FOR GRASSROOTS RESISTANCE AND CRITICAL CONTEXTS

Eighteenth-century transatlantic British culture offers no shortage of subtle to bold, non-violent to violent, spontaneous to organized, real and literary responses to social injustice—sex strike, silence, suicide, sabotage, song, storytelling, hunger strike, arson, abortion, insurrection, indolence, infanticide, impertinence, denunciation, disobedience, damage, dance, desertion, poison, picketing, pilferage, public speech, piracy, pamphlet, petitioning, flight, fake illness, false identity, faith, education, escape, boycott, massacre, march, mutiny, murder, riot, revolt, revolution, and writing. The authors I study collectively represent a form of rebellious literature intensely concerned with articulating on the page the spirit of urgent, outraged protest so frequently exhibited by the masses of oppressed British subjects at home and by the multitudes of persecuted peoples in British colonies.

Scholarship on my primary texts, Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Quobna Ottobah Cugoano's *Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (1787), and William Godwin's *Things as They Are; or, The Adventures of Caleb Williams* (1794), has principally stayed within particularized fields of identity politics, which highlight each writer's specific concerns of slavery, women's rights, and class struggles without fully attending to the writers' broader insights about how

power subordinates masses of people in corresponding, systemic patterns. My dissertation, therefore, contributes to studies in British Romanticism by showing how Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin can be read as a broad grassroots coalition representing marginalized people. Specifically, I find that all three writers employ a comparative methodology to measure cultural ideals against the actual lived conditions of oppressed groups; they devise plans for reformation, targeting the same social institutions that enforce "manifest injustice" (Sen 7); they demand the recognition of marginalized people as equal moral agents; they call for a redistribution of resources and rights; and they formulate tactics by which the subjugated can resist coercion even from within constricted circumstances. It is this complex of features combined with their balance between cultural analysis and direct advice for resistance by oppressed persons that makes all three of my primary texts dialectical social justice statements.

Scholars working from within feminist, postcolonial, race- and class-based literary theories have been invaluable for bringing the political relevance of these texts into critical view as they also revised the traditional literary canon to include literature by female, multiethnic, laboring, and peripheral authors. Most notable has been the work of Keith A. Sandiford on Cugoano, Virginia Sapiro on Wollstonecraft, and Gary Kelly on Godwin; their statements are still the unrivaled, breakthrough political interpretations of each author. All three of these landmark readings came during the influx of political and cultural theories

that bombarded the field of eighteenth-century literary studies between the 1970s and the 1990s. However, recent work over the past couple of decades has done little to continue the substantive conversations founded by these earlier critics. For example, feminist scholars still highlight Wollstonecraft's themes of motherhood, sexuality, and sensibility. Postcolonial critics still define, sometimes all too tentatively, the parameters of Cugoano's attack on racism and slavery. *Caleb Williams* scholarship remains splintered between debates about the influence of the author's technical innovations in genre and character and debates about the two endings. In short, critical conversation on these authors has stagnated. Cugoano scholarship has barely begun; a conflicted Wollstonecraft scholarship reflects the often contentious politics within academic feminism itself; and Godwin scholarship has never attended to the significance of the author's many marginalized characters.

Most work on Wollstonecraft and Cugoano has concentrated understandably on what Nancy Fraser refers to as the "politics of recognition" (3). Fraser, as a political theorist, does not write about these literary figures. However, her definition of the "politics of recognition" relates to the scholarship on both authors. Most work on these two figures has consisted of critics fighting to make these authors legitimate subjects of study through which to understand eighteenth-century culture—to include a fuller spectrum of the diverse attitudes and experiences expressed via the written word (3). To a lesser extent, and perhaps in a subtler manner, the same problem has influenced Godwin criticism.

Many of his early critics apologized for bringing *Caleb Williams* forward for literary study, given the author's radical politics and the residue of character defamation that became associated with Godwin in the later decades of his life. Scholars argued that the novel stood on its own merit as a crucial text for studies of the novel despite the author's personal reputation. This reliance on genre studies, however, obscured the political content of the novel. Despite Godwin's assertion that his novel was directed toward the lower-class reader not likely to read his political treatise, no major study has focused primarily, or even substantively, on the array of humble characters in the novel as exemplary of the common-place suffering with which the lower-class reader would identify.

I argue that the heart of Godwin's, Wollstonecraft's, and Cugoano's social justice stances must be found in their representations of the disenfranchised, displaced, and diasporic figures, real and imagined, who live lives injured by injustice. All three authors work through representations of specific individuals and marginalized groups; they discover recurrent patterns of injustice across identity categories; and they work through a comparative strategy to discover systemic patterns of social injustice that extend beyond the initial concentration on women, workers, or slaves. Cugoano unprecedentedly ascertains a shared history of genocide between African peoples and Native Americans (from South to North America). He confronts the British demonization of Spanish colonial conquests when he reveals the millions of native peoples enslaved or slain in similar manner by the British. He thus defies the self-deceptive British myth of

their supposedly more humane colonial practices. His vision extends beyond the boundaries of European nation-states to perceive the international conspiracy inherent in colonization and the slave trade. Wollstonecraft, meanwhile, compares the political and economic disenfranchisement of European women in France and Britain to the state of slavery suffered by Africans. While differing in degree of corporeal violence, she argues that women endure a parallel form of slavery, similar victims to laws that render them "cyphers;" forbidden from political participation, economic independence, and educational equality, all of these obstacles reduce women to a state of lesser humanity in the same manner that plantation slavery dehumanizes its victims (Wollstonecraft 90).

Godwin's parallel plots illustrate the repeated patterns of conspiracy, surveillance, cruelty, and corruption that cut across the experiences of the orphaned and landless domestic servant, the industrious tenant farmer, and the impoverished but genteel female dependent. Like Wollstonecraft, he invokes the language of a new eighteenth-century genre, the slave narrative, in his allusions to hunted prey and repeated diasporic figures to connect all of these domestic village incidents to the condition of slavery. All three authors balance the specific identity concerns of women, workers, and slaves with unstinting empathy for other oppressed populations and impulses to transform the entire social milieu that they critique. It is this crucial balance that I hope to articulate in this project. I incorporate a lexicon of social justice theory in my interpretations of these three texts because it accommodates each author's

balance between contemplating specific devalued identities and considering how social injustice threatens the entire moral fabric of eighteenth-century British society.

In the few studies that have moved beyond canon revision to examine the political arguments of my primary texts, one priority has been articulating whether or not the writers align themselves with 20th- and 21st-century political theories, whether socialist, democratic, republican, or utopian—retroactively attempting to categorize the writers' ideas using doctrines that did not fully exist in the late eighteenth century. An alternate approach by race, class, and feminist scholars has been to examine the texts as personal expressions of lived prejudices. Implicit in this second mode of inquiry for all identity-based scholarship, though it is most famously the mantra of second-wave feminists, is the idea that the personal is political, that sharing personal suffering denounces group persecution, and that communal storytelling solidifies a collective, political consciousness. Critics have indeed performed poignant readings by attending to the emotional, biographical, and psychological registers of my primary texts. However, they have also been disappointed to discover a lack of formal group organization or a clear sense of group consciousness for eighteenth-century women, Afro-Britons, or workers reflected by or in these three texts.

Amid their search for essential group consciousness or formal sociopolitical movements, however, literary critics have not fully recognized how

my authors use writing similarly to other daily acts of on-the-ground, in-the-moment political protest and social resistance. An aura of disappointment has often hovered over Wollstonecraft and Godwin, while an absence of research demonstrates a lack of academic appreciation of Cugoano. But this actually reveals the datedness of interpretations of each author and text. The most substantive political readings were done somewhat before greater interdisciplinary inclusion of historical and sociological scholarship into literary studies, and also prior to an growing body of work that has increasingly acknowledged tactical social resistance, such as acts of avoidance or flight, spontaneous riots, or temporary allegiances (like those between slaves, indentured servants, and Native Americans), as decipherable protests against social injustice and expressions of the grassroots demands of disenfranchised populations. Indeed, historians note how many of these incidents have only survived through criminal records, legal documents, and advertisements for runaway wives, servants, and slaves, written from the skewed perspectives of socio-political overseers.

Recent scholarship from radical historians[1] studying the transformation of British society over the long eighteenth century and across colonial contexts

[1] For work on Black Atlantic history and strategic alliances between Africans, indentured servants, and Native Americans, see Franklin & Schweninger, Taylor, Ford, Walvin, and Myers. For working class history, the development of working class social movements, and the recognition of the riot as social protest see the work of Edward P. Thompson, Adrian Randall, George Rudé, and John E. Archer. For more about how women navigated patriarchal laws against wage-earning for themselves, property ownership, marital disputes, and domestic violence see work by Bernard Capp, Amy

suggests that group identifications may have been more tactical and discernible than literary critics have yet acknowledged in their interpretations of my authors. I understand the work of Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin as translating the actions of daily discontent and often spontaneous expressions of resistance to injustice into the more formal, public sphere of writing to inspire exactly the kind of group consciousness for oppressed populations that earlier scholarship found disappointingly lacking. I also contend that Wollstonecraft's association of wifehood to slavery; Godwin's language of pursuit that echoes the figurative language of the slave narrative; and Cugoano's parallel between African and Native American colonial violence reveal each author's comprehensive perception of the similar ways in which mechanisms of social injustice affect each of their represented populations.

The next three sections review the major political criticism on each author while also suggesting the historical backdrop against which we should understand these texts as translating into writing the discontent inherent to revolts, riots, and revolutions into a non-violent, written rhetoric of resistance. I call Cugoano the forgotten abolitionist since he worked closely with other abolitionists, black and white Britons alike and through The Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, but criticism on this author has never placed him in comprehensive dialogue with his fellow activists, tending to study him in

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Louise Erikson, Nancy Locklin, Christine Wilson, Hannah Barker & Karen Harvey, Denise Fowler, Joanne Bailey, and Sara Mendelson.

isolation. Next, I review Wollstonecraft scholarship, whose reputation and politics have always been rife with conflict. Shortly following her death, eighteenth-and early nineteenth-century witnessed a backlash politics against this and other politically engaged female authors for their publications supporting women's equality. Even as feminist politics ushered in a new era of canon revision, however, Wollstonecraft scholarship remained contentious and, for this reason, has stymied today. Lastly, I turn to review Godwin scholarship, which displays a splintered tradition between reading the novel for its political content versus the author's innovativeness in psychological depth of characterization. This either/or understanding of *Caleb Williams* needs merging to understand how psychology of the servant protagonist and politics are intertwined.

Cugoano criticism has been limited. However, a growing body of historical work about slave resistance allows me to recognize this author's writing as another mode of confrontation that resists Western violence against Africans alongside these other, more direct actions by slaves themselves. Archival research over the past three decades has made visible the erased history of African resistance, revolt, and rebellion against the slave trade and plantation slavery. In *The Zong* (2011), James Walvin entitles his sixth chapter "An Open Secret" to indicate how "massacres" and "African sufferings on slave ships were unexceptional, and killings on slave ships were commonplace … Men who had worked on the African coast and on the Atlantic slave routes wrote about their

lives and adventures, describing African sufferings in very great detail" (104, 115). For much of the eighteenth century, the British public appears to have been little concerned with the "brutalities of slave trading," information routinely available in public insurance claims, newspaper announcements, and sailor's travel narratives.

The public was little concerned, that is, until the sensational *Zong* massacre (1781), in which 132 Africans were thrown overboard to their deaths so owners and investors could collect lost-cargo insurance (Walvin, *The Zong* 103). Captives were murdered by the hundreds when too sick to sell or too rebellious to maintain safety, but they were more often tortured into compliance as best practice for maximum profit. In *Crossings* (2013), Walvin again notes the lack of "secrecy about the violence on slave ships," since there was no hiding the "huge volumes of equipment designed to quell and control the slaves" like "'leg irons," "'handcuffs'" "iron collars," and "thumbscrews," produced by the "iron industries in Britain which turned out this equipment by the ton" almost exclusively for the massive transatlantic slave trade (103). Eric Taylor similarly examines shipboard revolt in *If We Must Die: Shipboard Insurrections in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (2006). He describes another "sensational case," this time in an American context, in August of 1764 aboard the *Hope*, in which sailors who murdered their captain concealed their deed with the "plausible" explanation that "rebellious slaves" were to blame (2). The very plausibility of their defense indicates how common was the knowledge of slave resistance: "Africans did not

succumb to a life of enslavement without a struggle, and this struggle had been well documented for generations" (2).

British brutality and African resistance were recorded and publicized. If various documents report the hundreds of Africans habitually murdered for insurance claims, then documentation also reveals the astounding number killed in revolts at sea and those who perished by hunger strike or suicide by drowning. Human traffickers dismissively characterized such desperate acts of resistance as "'sulky,'" as in one report of a hunger strike quoted by Walvin, to minimize African resoluteness and organization when engaging in "shipboard mutinies" and mass suicide (*Crossings* 103). Despite the "volumes" of torture devices designed to force feed, imprison, or subdue captives by pain, African people rebelled by any means at their disposal. Walvin has discovered, remarkably, "at least 120 slave upheavals which resulted in freedom for some of the Africans on board" while many other successful revolts against slave traffickers unfortunately came to a "miserable end" lost at sea (*Crossings* 120-121).

Moving from transatlantic ship to colonial plantation, Franklin and Schweninger concentrate the entirety of their book, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (1999), on the "'day to day' resistance of slaves" that "ranged from finding solace in a 'black community'" to murdering overseers and owners (2). Slaves commonly sabotaged the machines and tools of their forced labor, burned crops or plantation houses, fled for freedom or formed maroon colonies, avoided

the involuntary reproduction and birth of children into perpetual chattel slavery, avoided work to preserve their own health and survival, or persevered in maintaining a cultural heritage independent of their captors through self-education, song, oral history, faith, food, and dance (Franklin 2-4).[2] Recorded by biased whites, black resistance against capture and enslavement nevertheless survives (Franklin 2).[3]

The subject of survival and subsistence is the theme of Norma Meyers's study, *Reconstructing the Black Past: Blacks in Britain 1780-1830* (1996). Meyers offers a rich and subtle interpretation of the Afro-British struggle to survive within a hostile British society during a time when the status of Blacks transitioned from unpaid slave, to paid domestic servant, to free but precarious laborers in "occupations of soldier, sailor, [and] crossing sweeper, and those who professionally begged" (56). Meyers traces during this transitional period the agency of Afro-British persons who protested their slave status and maltreatment

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[2] See also Lacy K. Ford *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (2009), in which she investigates how skilled laboring slaves aided in "the Gabriel insurrection scare of 1800" which "lent a renewed sense of urgency to upper South whites' search for answers to the slavery question, given the all too apparent dangers of living in a slave society" (18). See also Albert J. Raboteau's now classic study, *Slave Religion: The 'Invisible Institution' in the Antebellum South* (1978, 2004), in which he traces the transformation, hybridity, and "adaptability" of "African beliefs and customs" and other "elements of African folklore, music, language, and religion" that were "modified by a new environment" in "the New World:" "Adaptability, based upon respect for spiritual power wherever it originated, accounted for the openness of African religions to syncretism with other religious traditions and for the continuity of a distinctive African religious consciousness" (4-5).

[3] Franklin raises the problem of tracing the history of a silenced people through biased documents written by whites, and Taylor also raises the same point about the "inherent biases" of documents, be they court documents, company accounts, ship logs, or newspaper advertisements. Both share a method of archival research combined with articulating "the voices of the millions of Africans who crossed the Atlantic … by looking at their actions" (11).

by "'vot[ing] with their feet' in a self-emancipation of flight from their owners … by running away black servant-slaves contributed to their own emancipation in a period predating agitation by abolitionists and the termination of the slave trade and slavery itself" (57). Once self-emancipated, survival became even more challenging as blacks could scarcely compete for unskilled jobs against their white counterparts in a racist society (57). However, Meyers argues that Afro-British maintained "supportive networks," clubs, and philanthropic collaborations for each other, with other ethnic groups in Britain, and with whites for socioeconomic survival and political exchange. Meyers's evidence suggests the existence of communities of Blacks and strategic sociopolitical communities along class lines rather than strict "colour lines" since "black and white were both oppressed in England" (131).

In Middle Passage mutinies, plantation uprisings, maroon wars, and successful full-scale revolutions, African and British slaves not only organized themselves but also collaborated with indigenous Indians, indentured servants, colonial peasants, and working-class whites; these alliances were surprisingly common and well-documented in the public press, period journals, company logs, prison-visitation records, philanthropic donation receipts, parish marriage registers, riot news, employment files, and criminal records (Taylor 3, Meyers 130-131).[4] Since *Thoughts and Sentiments* is classified as a literary text, it receives

[4] See also Richard Price's classic study, *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (1978, 1996), that dispels the notion of the "'docile slave'" and retraces "more than four centuries" of runaway slave communities that "dotted the fringes of plantation America, from Brazil to the southwestern United States, from Peru to the American

only a brief mention by Walvin in *The Zong*. However, *Thoughts and Sentiments* must be acknowledged as negotiating these multiple paradigms of resistance across Black Atlantic contexts in which African persons, some enslaved and some occupying less abject but still liminal socioeconomic positions, resisted coercion by all means at their disposal, including cooperative strategies with other ethnic and racial groups, to survive hostile foreign contexts.

Wollstonecraft and Godwin treat oppression of women and workers that originates from within the same society and whose modes of coercion and violence resemble those of plantation slavery. Despite the unabashedly misogynistic culture from within which Wollstonecraft wrote, scholarship led by academic feminists has often been unforgiving and suspicious of the author. This peculiar atmosphere of suspicion has targeted different aspects of the author's life and work according to the shifting politics of academic feminism. Scholars have criticized the author's sexual choices and familial relationships, intellectual gifts and writing skills, political viewpoints and reform agenda. I discuss all of this in greater detail in the literature review that follows. Here I highlight one potentially promising, but ultimately disappointing, moment in the context of the self-critical gaze that feminism turned on itself in the early 1990s. As second-wave feminism gave way to third-wave feminism, the transition was rife with protestations by lesbian feminists and feminists of color who criticized

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Southwest" and which "ranged from tiny bands that survived less than a year to powerful states encompassing thousands of members and surviving for generations or even centuries" (1-2).

the heterosexual bias of second-wave feminism, excluding the diverse experiences and needs of queer and non-white women.

Moira Ferguson's essay, "Mary Wollstonecraft and the Problem of Slavery" (1992), exemplifies this era of feminist analysis. Ferguson argues that Wollstonecraft's metaphoric conflation of the state of womanhood and marriage with the state of slavery in *Rights of Woman* was misguided. Unlike any critic before or since, Ferguson astutely notes Wollstonecraft's numerous references to slavery, representing "white, middle-class women" as "slaves" (82), and attempts to unpack their significance. On one hand, she observes that describing eighteenth-century European women's socioeconomic and legal limitations as a sort of enslaved state was unoriginal: it was a common analogy deployed by "conservative and radical women alike [who] railed against marriage, love, and education as forms of slavery perpetuated upon women by men and by the conventions of society at large" (83). On the other hand, Ferguson correctly contextualizes Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Woman* against the backdrop of the "national campaign against the slave trade." She cites Thomas Clarkson's renowned anti-slavery pamphlet, *A Summary View of the Slave-Trade, and of the Probable Consequences of Its Abolition* (1787), which Wollstonecraft likely read as a reviewer for the *Analytical Review*, established in the same year by her mentor, radical publisher Joseph Johnson.

Ferguson likewise points to the onset of the French Revolution with the storming of the Bastille (1789), Catherine Macaulay Graham's *Letters on Education*

(1790), and the slave revolt in the French colony of San Domingo (now Haiti) (1791) as influences on Wollstonecraft's reconceptualization of the marriage-as-slavery analogy. "The composition of *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* started in the midst of these tumultuous events, its political ingredients indicating Wollstonecraft's involvement in all these issues. Indeed, Mary Wollstonecraft seems to have been the first writer to raise issues of colonial and gender relations so tellingly in tandem" (87). She innovatively engages "a discourse on slavery that highlighted female subjugation" across a range of categories, such as "sensation, pleasure, fashion, marriage and patriarchal subjugation," and increasingly recognizes the parallel experiences of European women and colonial slaves as social and sexual victims of legally sanctioned, "humanly constructed" forms of "institutionalized slavery" in violation of their "inherent rights" (82-84, 86, 87).

Unfortunately, Ferguson's logic becomes skewed by her mode of interpretation, heavily influenced by a Feminist-Marxist[5] methodology, as evidenced by her examination of "gaps and incompletions," textual fissures, "slippages," logical contradictions, and "loaded silences" within Mary Wollstonecraft's variable usages of the woman-as-slave analogy (98, 95). Like other scholarship on Wollstonecraft from within this mode of feminist analysis, Ferguson rather disjointedly arrives at the foregone conclusion that the author

[5] A small body of criticism claims Wollstonecraft pre-figures utopian socialist tendencies, such as in Edward and Eleanor Marx-Aveling's essay, "Shelley and Socialism," (*To-Day*, April 1888); Emma Rauschenbusch-Clough's book *A Study of Mary Wollstonecraft and the Rights of Woman* (1898), and Barbara Taylor's more recent book, *Mary Wollstonecraft and the Feminist Imagination* (2003)

could not escape the mentality characteristic of patriarchal, bourgeois ideology. Ferguson finds that Wollstonecraft approaches a vision of collective identity for women, since "all women are opposed by all men in a general group identity" just as all slaves are oppressed by all masters (96). Ultimately, though, the author's alignment with the "independent or singular thought" that Ferguson calls a "cornerstone of bourgeois individualist ideology" (or "bourgeois individualism") only permits her visualization of a female revolution vis-à-vis slave and mob rebellion in a covert and displaced manner (90, 96). Her own class alignment occludes the possibility of extending her intellectual vision to imagine women collectively rebelling on the same scale as witnessed by the events in France or San Domingo. If Wollstonecraft sympathizes with the resistance of slaves, her occasionally demeaning views of them undermine her occasional sympathy due to "her social conditioning."

My work fundamentally disagrees with Ferguson's conclusion regarding Wollstonecraft's shortsighted vision. I suggest that Ferguson finds contradictions in *Rights of Woman* because her own methodology assumes authorial political and class affiliations that are in fact anachronistic to the late eighteenth century. A better approach, I contend, is to view the text as a negotiation of possibilities. My work agrees with Amartya Sen's view of Wollstonecraft as comparative philosopher, a perspective that fundamentally understands her approach to social justice as negotiating a space between social ideals and a pragmatic examination of real-world circumstances. Wollstonecraft

looks to the slave rebellion or working-class mob for inspiration, but then asks whether similar strategies for resistance are actually possible for European women. She finds troubling contextual differences that render a full-scale female rebellion unlikely. Marital obligations and the dangers inherent to pregnancy; economic survival and relative comfort for many; relegation to the domestic sphere and geographic separation—these are some of the practical realities that affect European women, in contrast to the more miserable, but more collectively motivating, conditions of plantation slavery. Wollstonecraft does not perform racialist appropriation, as feminists of color accused second-wave academic feminists of doing, but implicitly compares and contrasts the similarities and differences between chattel slavery (whose character was just being fully exposed) and the disenfranchisement of women. I suggest that Wollstonecraft subsequently imagines less violent means for social resistance, like self-education and more authentic self-expression, as pragmatic responses to the less violent form of servitude forced upon middle-class women.

Furthermore, if Wollstonecraft's focus is on the middle-class female, then this decision is, once again, a pragmatic decision to ground her work within her own realm of direct experience. She was a woman from a disintegrating genteel family, scarred by domestic violence, that relegated her and her sisters to impoverished survival and stigmatized them from engaging in lower-class labor even while they attempted to support their younger male siblings. A body of historical work on the daily lives of eighteenth-century women across all social

ranks has developed since the 1990s that offers a more vivid portrait of the possibilities, pressures, and strategies by which women negotiated and circumvented their legal, economic, and political non-status in this period. In contrast to legal codes and the idealized prescriptions passed down by masculine literatures, this work offers a revised, vivid portrait of the real and often legally non-compliant choices made by women. Unfortunately, this work has not had a significant impact on Wollstonecraft scholarship. Wollstonecraft's life was one of constant negotiation between social prescription, survival, supporting her siblings, and scribing social justice strategies. Ferguson is absolutely correct to place *Rights of Woman* and abolitionist treatises alongside on-the-ground, revolutionary social protests like the storming of the Bastille, slave revolts, laborer riots, and smaller tactics of daily resistance. It is perhaps ironic, then, that Ferguson fails to commend Wollstonecraft's prescriptions for female independence, authenticity, and sexual autonomy as strategies against social injustice achievable by largely geographically dispersed, domestically confined, and educationally limited middle-class women. I recognize these facets of Wollstonecraft's advocacy as unequivocal social justice interventionist work together with more dramatic, revolutionary action.

I apply this same attitude of possibility to Godwin's novel, *Things as They Are*; *or, the Adventures of Caleb Williams.* A puzzling circumstance affects Godwin criticism. Despite his declared intention to write *Caleb Williams* for the popular audience not likely to read philosophy, only one study has actually considered

how the novel may have been used by that humble target readership. The direction of my work agrees with Casie Legette's essay, "Remaking *Caleb Williams* in the Nineteenth Century" (2012), which traces the changing reception and readership of *Caleb Williams* as it was understood from the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries. She bases her argument on book historians William St. Clair's and Jonathon Rose's understanding that working-class audiences probably read novels long after their original publication date—long after the topical politics concurrent to the author may have been rendered obsolete by the passage of time. Later audiences, in particular the working-class Chartist movement of the early nineteenth century, continued to find *Caleb Williams* relevant for decades to come, despite the "depoliticizing" agenda that Legette discovers in early-nineteenth-century reviews (144).

Legette notes that *Caleb Williams* was continuously in print from 1793 to 1915. She cites St. Clair's recognition that it was "a standard of the radical canon" and goes on to explore how "delayed access might not always disadvantage readers" (143). She examines how reading contexts resulted in different responses to the novel across the 1820s, '30s, and '40s, varying responses that were always political. Legette thus departs from the standard view that *Caleb Williams* "was depoliticized by the 1830s," an assumption within Godwin scholarship that uncritically duplicates and perpetuates the nineteenth-century conservative claim that this novel and its author were "forgotten" (144). Hazlitt's famous analysis of Godwin in *The Spirit of the Age* (1825) was not one of

deliberate deflation. Hazlitt in fact celebrated the "revolutionary excitement of the 1790s" alongside Godwin's genius, moral vision, and "ambition," a moral and philosophical ambition that the multitude, enchained by "prejudice" and seduced by intemperate "fashion," miscarried in its "paradoxical" treatment of Godwin. Hazlitt portrays him at one moment "raised to heaven by the fury of the popular breath," but later "almost dashed in pieces, and buried in the quicksands of ignorance" (29-33).

For Legette, Hazlitt's work is troubled by its own subtle paradox. He commemorates the revolutionary mood of Godwin and the 1790s, but "treats the public's forgetting of Godwin as an active decision," a "purposeful act," and, astonishingly, refers to Godwin's as a posthumous fame when the author was in fact very much still alive and well[6] (Legette 144). In 1839, George Croly similarly asserted the public's deliberate disregard of Godwin, a notion repeated by Arnout O'Donnell the next year in the same conservative periodical, *Blackwood's Magazine*. Legette finds these assumptions of lapsed regard to be wishful thinking, since the novel never went out of publication. Its political usefulness culminated in the Chartist movement's excerpted use of it in the *Chartist Circular*, restructured and interspersed alongside the Circular's major topics under headings such as "Monarchy and Republicanism," "Thoughts for the

[6] Godwin in fact died in 1836 at age 80, six years *after* Hazlitt who passed in 1830 at only age 52. They were born 22 years apart, so referring to the 1790s as a bygone era implies it was more generationally removed from Hazlitt than it actually was. He was already a teenager and young man by the 1790s. Legette is rather vague but I believe she shrewdly observes a subtle act of distancing happening here in Hazlitt's work; alternatively, she may be slightly misreading here, assuming Hazlitt refers to Godwin himself rather than the lost "spirit" itself.

Thoughtful, "The Complaints of the Poor," "The Sprit of the Movement," "A Few Plain Facts," and "Effects of Class Legislation" (*Chartist Circular* No. 57 & No. 58, 1840).[7] This "first working-class mass movement in Britain" transformed Caleb from a "character into a political figure in his own right" (Legette 153). Whether mourning the decline of his reputation or hoping for the decline of his influence, critics of the latter Romantic era underestimated how the novel continued to appeal to the common reader and a "mass, working-class audience" (Legette 146). Mass reading audiences did in fact deploy the text for lower-class political expression: Chartism identified with Caleb's resistance against socioeconomic tyranny and his struggle for self-determination as the Chartist movement fought for voting rights, the secret ballot, equal representation and poor relief.

Despite the literary and historical work that I have highlighted above, the situation remains largely unchanged for scholarship on my primary texts: critics tend to read either for political theory or for personal expressiveness and too often look for anachronistic politics by which to understand the arguments and strategic alignments made by Cugoano, Wollstonecraft, and Godwin. I contend that social justice theory offers a way to reframe and resituate the strategic alignments and rhetorical choices that all three writers deploy for their primary purpose of altering the moral trajectory of their society en masse.

I argue that these texts represent a process of defining social injustice as much as they offer dialectical strategies for social justice. Scholars have often

[7] Legette does not mention these headings or the content of the *Chartist Circular* in her essay, but such a reading would be a fruitful one for Godwin scholarship.

referred to each of these texts as concerned with justice, but have then been routinely disappointed to find that the texts fall short as full equal-rights statements. In fact, Cugoano, Wollstonecraft, and Godwin willingly acquiesce to degrees of inequality in some significant instances. This disappointment results from a misunderstanding about what social justice is and does, a misguided assumption that social justice simply means democracy or equal rights. Interestingly, academics tend to approach texts in much the same way as transcendental political philosophers approach theories of justice. Transcendental political philosophers ask, "What is justice?" implying, of course, what is perfect justice. Vittorio Bufacchi examines the problem of undefined injustice in his own field of political philosophy, discovering that amid numerous theories of justice, no scholar has paused to first define injustice. He believes the entire discipline, including prolific work by John Rawls and Amartya Sen, has simply assumed that injustice is the absence of justice. Political philosophers and literary critics assume we already know what injustice is, but social injustice can be logically and reasonably defined in ways that we find exactly counter to projects against discrimination, violence, equal opportunity, liberty, universal suffrage, or even basic standards of human dignity.

Bufacchi illustrates this logical flaw through a hypothetical example of aristocratic justice, in which a redistribution of rights or resources is unjust for violating a code of ethics that defines justice as noble birthright. If entitlements of birth found justice, then any interference with those entitlements becomes unjust.

Before understanding the authors' aims, then, an initial analysis of how they define injustice is necessary for each body of scholarship. Bufacchi's example serves as reminder that aristocratic social foundations had not yet given way by the late eighteenth century to what we today label as democracy (too often assumed to be the only possible model of justice). But justice, as Bufacchi reminds, us is not tied to any one sociopolitical or economic system. Many scholars have presented Wollstonecraft's and Godwin's viewpoints as radical in contrast to Edmund Burke's conservatism, which defends exactly the form of aristocratic system Bufacchi describes. But even Burke opposed slavery, if not the entire colonial system; he also indicted Warren Hastings for crimes against humanity in India. Wollstonecraft and Godwin represent a progressive politics of a sort that loosely intersects with later democratic values. Burke nevertheless shares their concern for preventing inhumane atrocities and unethical abuses of power. Is he not then also concerned with social injustice? My work understands injustice along a continuum. Burke primarily defines it in terms of acts of violence; my primary authors include a wider range of abuses to define "injustice as maldistribution," "injustice as exclusion," and "injustice as disempowerment" (Bufacchi 9-10). A basic concern for human well-being is not necessarily negated by any particular socio-political arrangement. Therefore, these historical texts are better understood along a spectrum, as compassionate but divergent responses to social problems, responses that contribute to new

social arrangements by expressing through the medium of writing the tangible needs of people who did not have a formal voice.

Social justice is not limited to or even primarily concerned with perfectly equal rights. The search for perfected programs of philosophical theory or for wholesale egalitarian reform is a misguided project anachronistically and ambiguously based on misconstrued or vague terminology. These authors, in these texts, are less concerned with utopian perfection and more concerned with urgently ending social evils. They voice indignation against social wrongs and urgently propose practical interventions to end gross injustices against specific groups of people, in Britain and across the Atlantic, for their historical present and across time for future generations. In so doing, they define conditions of social injustice for the late eighteenth century. Scholars have neglected to analyze how each writer defines social injustice before offering their instruction to correct it; my work seeks to fill this gap.

No study has placed all three of these writers in dialogue together, and no study has ever approached the texts as definitions of and statements against social injustice prior to examining each writer's recommendations for reform and social action. I attend to their discussions of social injustice as resources denied to oppressed persons; the "grievous wrongs" and acts of violence imposed upon Africans, women, and workers; and how the writers demonstrate the "radical inequality" of social institutions supported by the state and enforced through daily behavior (Bufacchi 8). As social activists whose medium is writing,

Cugoano, Wollstonecraft, and Godwin are far more invested in asking, "Given the current state of society and through the work of writing, what immediate needs and targets for reform can help end gross injustice?" They respond by arguing the humanity of women, Africans, and workers as they deconstruct assumptions of natural inferiority, demand extensive change to social foundations, and empathize with other oppressed populations across their traditionally conceived genres of vindication, slave narrative, and novel. My work changes the fundamental question asked of my primary texts so that all the writers' decisions of tone, genre, perspective along with their assessments of social evils and challenges to customary beliefs or practices all function as strategic, socially active choices deployable by readers rather than reflections of merely personal politics or private experiences.

Ultimately, my work incorporates a lexicon of social justice philosophy, political theory, and activism into literary studies to show that Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin not only recognize corresponding patterns of oppression but also utilize strikingly similar literary devices and rhetorical strategies by which to combat injustice. All three authors share the same fundamental aim—to transform the dismal existence of the oppressed groups they represent. Their complementary methodology of cultural analysis combined with practical goals replicates the top-down, bottom-up dialectical methodology at the core of social activism. When I refer to the top-down, bottom-up dialectical method, I specifically refer to the dialectical mode that has developed through the actual,

on-the-ground work of grassroots social activists. Within this mode, activists target change in two directions simultaneously. From the top-down perspective, they want to dismantle social, political, and philosophical systems that sustain oppressive regimes with coercive power; they want to restructure socioeconomic institutions, like the law, economy, civic representation, religion, or education, so that more community members gain access to those valued resources. Activists complement these top-down interventions with bottom-up strategies: adaptable and feasible acts of daily resistance able to be accomplished by oppressed people, such as those I catalogue at the beginning of this introductory chapter.

Authorial rhetoric of resistance employs this bi-directional gaze and is thus dialectical social justice. The authors look in two directions: from the top down at the systemic causes and effects of different dimensions of injustice, and from the bottom up, from the perspective of its victims. Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin often work through juxtaposition to sustain the dialectical tension between these counterpoints. Perhaps this is one reason why some of their contemporaries and historical critics have considered *Rights of Woman*, *Thoughts and Sentiments*, and *Caleb Williams* to be disorganized, redundant, illogical, or even clumsy. My review of scholarship on these three works suggests political motives behind the devaluation of these texts. Nevertheless, I contend that the dialectical social justice model allows me to understand the rhetorical and literary choices of the authors as complementary, multi-directional strategies through which they craft a dynamic rhetoric of grassroots social advocacy.

Quobna Ottobah Cugoano: The Forgotten Abolitionist

Any student of history may recognize in my opening list examples of resistance tactics used by slaves who sometimes sabotaged the machines and tools of their forced labor; burned crops or big houses; fled for freedom or formed maroon colonies of their own; avoided the involuntary reproduction and birth of children into perpetual chattel slavery; murdered their captors rather than be murdered themselves; avoided or slowed down work to preserve their own health and survival; or persevered in maintaining a cultural heritage independent of their captors through song, oral history, self-education, faith, food, and dance. I have reviewed some of the scholarship documenting these tactics above.

Cugoano avows the African's birthright of liberty, recounting its meaningfulness for kidnapped African men, women, and children for whom "death was more preferable than life" (15). As an abducted child, he joined his countrymen and women who collectively planned to "burn and blow up the ship, and to perish altogether in the flames" to avoid the chattel slavery to which they were sailing; with the adult men in chains, the women and children were to be the initiators of the rebellion (15). Cugoano's is one of few eyewitness accounts of the Middle Passage and West Indian slave auction written by a former captive of the slave system. In contrast to his Sons of Africa colleague and fellow Afro-British abolitionist writer, Olaudah Equiano, Cugoano's *Thoughts and Sentiments* offers few narrative elements. But it does contain

substantive, if brief, description of the author's own kidnapping at gunpoint as a child, the "factory" processing of captive Africans in the various European forts on African shores, being "chained and pent up in holes" aboard the slave ship, with slavers "stowing [Africans] in the holds of ships like goods of burden, with closeness and stench," and routinely inflicting "cruel punishments" on enchained Africans to keep them too hurt, scared, and sick to fight. Cugoano recounts his descent into chattel slavery, forced transatlantic migration, and the slave auction in the West Indies: entire families were sold like "beasts," "stripped naked," in front of each other to be flogged, whipped, and lashed while hungry, naked and overcome with "shame and grief," "hard labour, dejection, and despair," a sad trade for their lost dignity, freedom, family, and country (74-75). Recounting his direct experience as a victim of the slave system, Cugoano educates his British audience about the inhumane reality of the international slave system by which they actively and passively benefit.

He also challenges every major argument supporting slavery and deconstructs racialist theories. Cugoano's is the most radical abolitionist, anti-racialist statement published in eighteenth-century Britain and the least written about by scholars today. His editor, Vincent Carretta, explains this lack of scholarship by noting that "the least is known about [Cugoano's] life" (ix). Similar to the academic feminist project of recovery and recognition of women writers that began in the 1970s, postcolonial and race scholars these past three decades have sought to recover the writing, representation, and experience of

peoples of the African diaspora in what Paul Gilroy has called the Black Atlantic. While scholars have certainly brought issues of race, colonial identity, migration, diaspora, imperialism, cultural hybridity, and resistance theory to the forefront of literary and cultural studies today, very little has changed in the attention paid to *Thoughts and Sentiments*.

I suggest that Cugoano's hybrid jeremiad, slave narrative, abolitionist tract, and political treatise has been neglected because it does not lend itself readily to literary studies, despite its designation as a literary text. George Boulukos's book, *The Grateful Slave: The Emergence of Race in Eighteenth-Century British and American Culture* identifies a recurrent trope simultaneously used by eighteenth-century apologists for slavery and abolitionists alike. The trope portrayed the African as grateful to his colonial master for rescuing him from poverty, ignorance, and heathenism in Africa and painted plantation labor as a gentle, pastoral existence. The trope of the grateful slave is most often associated with the abolitionist movement. Boulukos discovers the opposite to be true; the trope in any usage only underwrote white supremacy (2-3). Cugoano, "almost alone among abolitionists," "refuse[s] to make distinctions between better and worse forms of slavery" (178). *Thoughts and Sentiments* deliberately disengages from identifiable tropes; it avoids the sentimental language of white supremacy and colonial fantasy. In addition to educating the British reader about the hostile realities of the slave system, Cugoano deconstructs many of the same tropes that postcolonial and critical race theorists examine in current criticism today. His

very refusal to deploy typical literary devices, its political directness, and its nonconformity to a standard genre all contribute to scholarly neglect. In short, it perhaps makes too direct a statement to lend itself to the types of interpretation typical of literary studies.

The most complete statements about *Thoughts and Sentiments* have come from scholars who relocate the text outside of the previously assigned genres of jeremiad or slave narrative. My study will build upon work by Jeffrey Gunn, Keith A. Sandiford, and Anthony Bogues, who all understand *Thoughts and Sentiments* more broadly as a political treatise. Gunn identifies three veins of Cugoano's political protest: analysis of scripture to prove slavery opposes Christian principles; description of the refined civil systems of African communities to show how freeborn Africans value "liberty, justice and equity;'" and a declaration that abducting Africans for enslavement betrays rights of property through criminal theft. Slavery is theft because it forcibly removes persons from their own property, goods, and livelihoods, unjustifiably invades sovereign nations, and coerces labor (Gunn 642, 646). Bogues argues that Cugoano's importance does not rest in his literariness, but rather in his "political discourse on natural liberty and natural rights" (26). He documents ten major political ideas of Cugoano, elaborating on three: "Cugoano's antislavery ideas, his conceptions of evil, and his views on the relationship between natural liberty and natural rights." In contrast to contemporaneous philosophers like Paine, Diderot, and Montesquieu, who argued that slavery betrayed a natural right to

liberty, Cugoano stands out for arguing that slavery also betrayed "reason" and "'common humanity'" (Bogues 35, 38).

Keith A. Sandiford's *Measuring the Moment: Strategies of Protest in Eighteenth-Century Afro-English Writing* (1988) asserts that *Thoughts and Sentiments* is a "polemical and uncompromising . . . rebuttal" of proslavery rhetoric and a "vindication of the Black's moral and intellectual authenticity" (10-11). He examines how Cugoano deploys "a variety of voices," debunks Biblical precedents for slavery, corrects slavery apologists' falsehoods about Africa, discredits theories that skin color indicated racial difference, and protests slavery in terms of "general secular philosophy" (10-11; 98; 101-102; 103). Of greatest importance to my work is Sandiford's identification of Cugoano's "antislavery attack against the four great pillars of the British state: the law, the monarchy, Parliament, and the church" (106). This attack on "institutional authority" was "a major landmark for such an early abolitionist work" (106). My work reframes Cugoano's treatment of the institutional basis of slavery as a model of dialectical social justice. I show that Cugoano's attention to institutions is indeed important as a top-down strategy for social justice in particular. Moreover, I argue that this is just one aspect of Cugoano's social justice methodology, which he complements with bottom-up interventions.

William Godwin: Splintered Tradition

Any student of history may recognize slave resistance, but perhaps not every student would recognize in my opening catalogue the extent to which

women and workers within domestic Britain also resorted to many of those same forms of protest and resistance. For example, laborers, tradespeople, and servants of both sexes in rural and urban Britain engaged in riots over food shortages, the enclosure acts, turnpike taxes, the dismantling of trades through mechanization, and in rejection of the hundreds of new "capital punishments for crimes against property" (Thompson 60). Historians have reasoned that the lower orders across Britain staunchly resisted the transition of England from feudal agricultural to modern free-market economy and protested in a more organized manner than the word "riot" implies.[8] Thompson, in particular, sees

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[8] Edward P. Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963/1991) may now be a classic example of historical work on the changing class system in Britain during the eighteenth century and the previously neglected recognition of ways in which working class and impoverished British men and women demanded basic needs of sustenance and ethical work options; this book has had widespread influence across many academic disciplines, and it remains relevant as a basis for new scholarship. I include it here precisely because of its historical status—it should have influenced Godwin scholarship decades ago but no scholar of Godwin has drawn the relationship between the actual forms of protest laborers engaged in and the forms of resistance in the novel. Adrian Randall's *Before the Luddites: Custom, Community and Machinery in the English Woollen Industry, 1776-1809* (1991) examines how cloth-makers resisted and protested industrialization of their trade in attempts to preserve the greater autonomy of their craft which culminated in the Luddite riots between 1811-16, in which organized workers destroyed the machinery of the factories and mills. Andrew Charlesworth offers three relevant titles all of which discuss or map labor protests across Britain: *An Atlas of Rural Protest in Britain 1548-1900* (1983), *An Atlas of Industrial Protest in Britain, 1750-1990* (1996), and *Markets, Market Culture and Popular Protest in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (1996). His collection of work covers unified protests and riots by workers across a range of locations and trades in responses to the Corn laws, tolls along trade roads, the Cider Tax, food scarcity, and famine. George Rudé's *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (1965) recognizes the "'aggressive mob' or the 'hostile outburst'" who engaged in "such activities as strikes, riots, rebellions, insurrections, and revolution" as legitimate instances of political demonstration during Britain's and France's transitional decades to "'industrial'" societies (4). He also recognizes how the "'lower orders'" were a hybrid group of workers and not merely "peasants" by this period, concerned with "a rough-and-ready kind of natural justice' by breaking windows, wrecking machinery, storming markets, burning their enemies of the moment in effigy, firing hayricks, and 'pulling

laborers and servants in this more radical view, explaining that many supposed developments actually harmed the lower orders by taking from them traditional freedoms and entitlements that ensured their survival and independence, such as common grazing lands for livestock, water access, shares of the harvest, access to firewood, limited hunting rights, and participation in the regulation of local trade markets. In addition to rioting (and like African slaves abroad), laboring communities established counter-cultures at "constant war with authority," with entire villages "coining, poaching, [evading] taxes [or] smuggling" (Thompson 61). These illicit activities in addition to "petty theft" and "primitive forms of industrial rebellion—destroying a silk loom, throwing down fences when commons were enclosed, and firing corn ricks—were to be punished by death" (60). Similar to their African counterparts in the colonies, laborers in England were coerced under threat of death, but they defied the law to meet their basic needs and to preserve their livelihoods.

Several characters in Godwin's *The Adventures of Caleb Williams* struggle to survive by resisting coercion, confinement, and domination. Most of them die. They die through acts of betrayal by powerful gentry, betrayals manifestly protected by law and latently by social decorum. Thus, the novel questions

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down' their houses, farms, fences, mills, or pubs, but rarely by taking lives" (5-6). See also related work Eric Hobsbawm's *The Age of Revolution, 1789-1848* (1962). John E. Archer's *Social Unrest and Popular Protest in England, 1780-1840* (2000) picks up with Rudé's work to make a stronger claim that riots (the Gordon Riots of 1780, Luddism, anti-enclosure riots, and anti-Poor Law riots) all have historical significance on par with "'high politics'" for influencing social change in Britain during late eighteenth-century (1).

hereditary privilege and supporting social institutions like the law, economy, tradition, patriarchy, and customs of deference to rank. Institutions are unjust because they serve the caprices of a few wealthy men, crushing noncompliant characters. This novel, the most canonical of my primary texts, had an easily recognized, controversial political agenda for its contemporary reviewers. Godwin himself prefaced the novel by asserting his intention to distribute the principles of his political treatise, *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice and its Influence on Morals and Happiness* (1793), to a wider audience through the vehicle of fiction. He reasoned that fiction would target lower-class readers not likely to read a political essay, and declared the novel an imaginative case study about the way "government intrudes itself into every rank of society" thus supporting "domestic and unrecorded despotism, by which man becomes the destroyer of man" (xx, 1831 edition). Godwin apparently wrote his preface "on the day of Thomas Hardy's arrest on charges of High Treason" (Christoph Bode 1988, 97). The preface was not, however, published in the first edition, owing to the tumultuous climate accompanying the Treason Trials of 1794 that held all radical individuals, groups, and their publications suspect for sedition.

Godwin's explanation for the novel came out in the next edition the following year, and critics have since contemplated whether or not it ought to be taken at face value. Christoph Bode explains the prevalent suspicion that Godwin exaggerated the political content of the narrative: "The question in short is, whether Godwin in his preface did not overstate his case and make too much

of the political dimension of an adventure story" (97-98). Many critics before and after Bode look to Godwin's later preface in *Fleetwood* (1832), in which Godwin emphasized the psychological and "flight and pursuit" aspects of the narrative over his earlier political objectives (Bode 98). The author appears to have contradicted himself, and some reviewers have implied he constructed a dishonest description of his method in order to sell more books in these later decades. Gary Kelly is one sympathetic reader who takes a more diplomatic approach to Godwin's apparent self-contradiction. He notes the novel came to be known simply as *Caleb Williams* by the 1830s, so Godwin edited his title from the obvious political language of *Things as They Are* to the more character-oriented *Caleb Williams* during this same period. Kelly reasons that Godwin did so to coincide with the literary taste of Romantic Era readers who preferred "individual psychology" over socio-political moralism (Kelly, 1976, 180).

Suspicion of the author has been as much a preoccupation for critics as has been the psychological conflict and complexity of his characters. Some modern scholars have approached the text with expressions of embarrassment for Godwin's misguided philosophy. Apologetically appreciative Patrick Crutwell, in his essay "On *Caleb Williams*" (1958), famously sums up Godwin's mid-twentieth-century reputation. He was by then known as the "long discredited philosopher whom Wordsworth and Shelley—it is hard to see why—were taken in by; we know him as the husband of the Rights of Woman and the father of Frankenstein; we know him as Shelley's comic-pathetic Micawber of a father-in-

law" (87). Crutwell is one of several mid-twentieth-century psychoanalytic literary critics responsible for ushering in a new era of Godwin criticism after decades of dubious acceptance as canonical author. He acknowledges Godwin's intention to show "how individuals are conditioned by education and society" (93), but actually argues against all dogmatic interpretation. He believes the book is best understood in modern, psychoanalytic terms, with Falkland the "passionate narcissist," violent Tyrell motivated by the "inferiority complex," and Caleb stuck "between love and hate" (94). Godwin misunderstand his own work: he was not displaying social conditions suffocating to individual morality; his characters' psychological motives were more akin to the profound emotional forces of Greek tragedy (94). Time proves Godwin's philosophical ideas "shoddy," but the emotional immediacy, "abnormal psychology," thrill of "mystery," and concern "for the persecuted rejects of society" makes *Caleb Williams* "a living work of the romantic imagination . . . in its crazy, violent, imperfect way" (95). For Crutwell, the novel transcends its author's political intentions and its historical interment.

Rudolf F. Storch's essay, "Metaphors of Private Guilt and Social Rebellion in Godwin's *Caleb Williams*" (1966), agrees. Storch extends his critical view, also through the psychoanalytic lens, to label Caleb, Godwin, other late eighteenth-century writers, and the entire epoch of the simultaneously revolutionary and reactionary 1790s all as neurotic due to "a great sensitivity to the lack of communal life which the eighteenth century had not brought into consciousness"

(206). But it is exactly this supposed neurosis that makes *Caleb Williams* feel so modern, more modern than later Victorian novels or even Goethe's *Faust*. While not one of the great novels of history, the text resonates with readers for its "modern soul and exceptional intensity (and a dream-like clarity);" the guilt-driven, anxiety-ridden narrative reflects for Storch the dominant emotions of modern Western Culture (188-189). Godwin projects into the narrative his Calvinistic fear of divine persecution; Caleb reflects Godwin's own irresolvable "mental conflict with its projections, defenses, disguises and subterfuges;" therefore Caleb and Godwin together reflect the anxious modern consciousness (203-204). The novel is not about social abuses but is rather a "narrative of obsession" and "tragic destiny" (189). Godwin was unable to see the significance of his own work, and no one else from the eighteenth century could have fully interpreted the "deeper truths," "turbulent energies," or "unresolved conflict of subterranean emotions" saturating *Caleb Williams* (195, 190). Few but significant interpretations of *Caleb Williams*, like Crutwell's and Storch's work, resurrected this novel for a new generation of modern scholarship. However, they did so by overlooking its political content, preferring to see it as an essential reflection of an irrational, modern consciousness.

Understanding the text as expressive of an irrational modern consciousness conflicts with Godwin's belief in social reform based on moral reason. Consequently, Gary Kelly retraces the climate and heritage from which *Things as They Are* emerged in the landmark statement on Godwin: *The English*

Jacobin Novel 1780-1805 (1976). Kelly consistently refers to this novel by its original title, *Things as They Are*, to reclaim its original political intention. It is Kelly who establishes the predominant, current understanding of *Caleb Williams* as belonging to an eighteenth-century genre of political fiction, the Jacobin novel. The British Jacobins were progressive writers and thinkers who sympathized with the French Revolution and who "believed that environment and education form character absolutely, that distinctions of wealth and social rank not based on service and virtue must always be artificial, oppressive, and vicious," and that rational appeals would spark political reform (Gold 612). Kelly argues that Godwin, Robert Bage, Elizabeth Inchbald, and Thomas Holcroft together adapted several major genres of fiction to craft a new mode of writing that had its own distinctive "unity of design" based on a principle of necessity (20). A character's thoughts and actions had to appear naturally and necessarily driven by the incidents of his or her imagined environment. The Jacobin novelists sought to dramatize how the social environment determined the lives of characters, just as social and state institutions controlled individuals in the real world.

Kelly reads *Caleb Williams* as a tripartite allegory linking Godwin's philosophical treatise to both the English Civil War and the British government's reactionary policies to the French Revolution. Godwin thus metaphorically condenses more than a hundred years of "Dissenting history: the struggle for truth and for liberty, and the continual risk of incurring for that reason all the

horrors of intolerance, persecution, and civil strife" (Kelly 208). Kelly weaves earlier threads of apolitical scholarship on genre and psychology into his political interpretation, agreeing that the novelist crafted new techniques in psychological realism and certainly experimented with genre. Yet, the author always did so with a moral, reformist message in mind. Godwin culled and combined elements of fiction from various eighteenth-century genres "suitable to his agenda;" that agenda was to expose social and political corruption, demonstrate the power dynamics and inevitable oppression of hierarchal social arrangements, express the pain of persecution for oppressed persons, and directly refute Edmund Burke's arguments in *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Kelly identifies an entirely new subgenre of eighteenth-century fiction, the Jacobin novel, and its unifying theme of personal experience inexorably bound by environmental circumstances.

Kelly establishes the political landscape within which Godwin and his collaborators write and paves the way for a small body of criticism that examines the political import of *Caleb Williams*. However, it would be an exaggeration to state that scholarship has continued Kelly's project with the same vigor and focus. The fact is, the field remains splintered. The psychoanalytic criticism of Crutwell and Storch has given way to the new iteration of affect theory, which combines psychoanalytical interpretive strategies with cultural studies methods. In her article "William Godwin's 'Caleb Williams:' The Tarnishing of the Sublime" (2001), Monika Fludernik approaches the novel with a deep concern for

many issues that could be considered social justice concerns, but she does not quite move her argument in this direction. She extends earlier understandings of character psychology and behavior, the gothic narrative structure, the technique of character mirroring, and the relationship between two eighteenth-century psychosocial theories, Edmund Burke's *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757) and Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). Literary and philosophy scholars generally consider Burke's *Sublime and Beautiful* to be an aesthetic theory, but Fludernik shows how Godwin deploys it for its social implications: Godwin uses the sublime-as-terror to figure ruinous social domination at the institutional level, while he uses the sublime-as-ardour to figure human connection at the personal level. Sometimes Burkean sublime and Smithian sympathy are in tension, but the novel makes its greatest statement when Godwin reconciles them. For Fludernik, Godwin reconciles Burkean "ardour" and Smithian sympathy in the moment when Caleb and Falkland finally recognize each other's "mutual humanity" (884); Godwin resituates Burkean sublimity away from authority, fear, and "power relations" and places it within a model of humanity and society founded on "sympathy, reason, justice, and true equality" (888-889). Fludernik 's final paragraphs focus on concepts like empathy, equality, justice, and the fair "distribution of power and wealth" as personal ethics and public ideals shared between *Caleb Williams* and *Political Justice* (889). Fludernik's language of human rights, social cooperation, and redistribution of resources are concepts of Godwin's

philosophical justice, her phrasing is also suggestive of current theories of justice which appear to inform her work, but these concepts are the critic's end points rather than her sustained foci.

Mary Wollstonecraft: Oppositional Feminist Politics

Many of the historians referred to above have shown that enslaved women across the Black Atlantic and women of the lower ranks in England participated in the same acts of defiance as their male counterparts far more than previously assumed—slave ship insurrections, plantation revolts and assassinations, industrial and agricultural sabotage, strikes and silence, guild marches and food riots—women were often integral not only marginal participants. Along a similar line, historians have uncovered archival evidence that shows that significant portions of single, married, and widowed women of middle ranks independently maintained themselves in businesses, trades, and as heads of households.[9] Bernard Capp, for instance, draws on the work of anthropologist James Scott to expound upon the subtle "strategies available to subordinate groups too weak to resist openly;" some of these subtle, "hidden forms of defiance or subversion" include "grumbling, subversive jokes, and unauthorized meetings which create times, spaces, and networks beyond the control and knowledge of the ruling elites" (24-25). For Capp, women "in the

[9] Bernard Capp *When Gossips Meet* (2003), Amy Louise Erikson *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (1995), Nancy Locklin *Women's Work and Identity in Eighteenth-Century Brittany* (2007), Hannah Barker *The Business of Women* (2006), Christine Wiskin Chapter 5 "Urban Businesswomen in Eighteenth-Century England," Joanne Bailey *Unquiet Lives: Marriage and Marriage Breakdown in England, 1660-1800* (2003), and Jane Donawerth & Adele Seeff *Crossing Boundaries* (2000).

middling and lower levels" bypassed the "patriarchal edifice" of early-modern society through gossip networks, female support networks, and parish-political networks "to influence their own domestic lives and the affairs of their neighborhood" (2). What recent studies have begun to show more and more is that, despite the laws of coverture and primogeniture, despite the predominant ideal of confined female domesticity (at least for middle and upper class women), women at all social levels during the early modern period and throughout the long eighteenth century persistently found "ways to limit, evade, or accommodate male domination" even if there was no recognizable organized feminist movement per se (Capp 2).

Whether of the ruling elite or of lower rank, all women of the eighteenth century were fatefully linked by their shared vulnerability to spousal abuse. Women of all social ranks commonly suffered legally sanctioned confinement and corporeal punishment at the hands of their husbands; sought "informal" means to stop violence against them by appealing to friends, family, and clergy before pursuing legal interventions; and, as Elizabeth Foyster explains, pursued formal legal recourse as a "last resort" to end spousal violence once informal attempts failed (16). Despite their similar subjection to spousal violence, women's legal recourse often depended on their financial resources, with women in lower social positions rarely able to pursue legal separation or full criminal charges against violent husbands. Women of the lower ranks simply could not live without their husband's financial support. Even if he was cruel, a slow

death from starvation and illness was often the real alternative to a husband's maltreatment. The expense of legal separation could easily run far beyond even the financial means of more well-off women since a husband maintained total control of a wife's property, assets, earnings, and children even if proven cruel enough to warrant a judgment of legal separation with financial maintenance. Ultimately, legal separation was difficult to obtain, and women faced profound economic and social hardships following separation (Foyster 17-19). Even so, hundreds of women did pursue legal means to end their traumatic marriages, finding the risky alternatives preferable to suffering further physical, mental, or sexual violence. Foyster thus demonstrates an important distinction between British law in fact and in practice: in fact, men had total legal control of their daughters and wives, but in practice this control was never unchallenged.

Neither state nor ecclesiastical courts tried to end wife abuse altogether; as Russell P. Dobash and Emerson Dobash explain, the law attempted to regulate the form and degree of acceptable violence husbands might wield against their wives (1981). Given the motive of courts to preserve marriages, the near impossibility of divorce, which required an act of Parliament, and the extreme difficulty of getting even a legal separation, some women resorted to running away. Foyster explains that runaway wives were subject to criminal charges even when declaring physical cruelty against their spouses. More men than women appear to have deserted their partners, but Foyster emphasizes that both men and women could sue a spouse for "'restitution of conjugal rights,'"

pleading cruelty was no guarantee of court protection, and refusal to abide by a court order to resume "cohabitation" could, and did, result in imprisonment for men and women (16-17). If a woman deserted, she was unable to take her children since custody always belonged to the husband; an abusive husband maintained his right of child custody regardless of the inherent harm of the household.

However, desertion was not uncommon. Historians such as Dobash and Dobash and Janice Haaken have situated eighteenth-century runaway wives within the history of the battered women's movement in Britain. In fact, Haaken's, *Hard Knocks: Domestic Violence and the Psychology of Storytelling* (2010) builds upon Dobash and Dobash's earlier work in their book, *Violence Against Wives* (1979). She refers to their method of including various forms of literature into their historical research, in which they look to folk stories, broadside ballads, and newspaper advertisements as public expressions of the social problem of wife abuse. For example, Haaken refers to Dobash and Dobash's reference to a 1764 newspaper advertisement in which a husband publically "forbade any person from giving his runaway wife credit or harboring her" at the "risk of prosecution" (88). Not only was the wife's desertion potentially criminal, but so was helping her. But women wrote back! They wrote back detailing the violence that forced them to flee for their lives, they wrote to claim their right to credit in their own names, and they wrote to effectively make a private problem a public issue. Foyster, Haaken, and Dobash and Dobash thus read women's negotiations

of various legal routes and their desertions of violent marriages as acts of social protest and "active resistance to male violence" (Haaken 88).

Mary Wollstonecraft was of course no stranger to male violence or patriarchal prejudice. She harbored and abetted her sister, Eliza Bishop, a runaway wife. Her biographer Janet Todd characterizes her as prone to delusional fantasy, suggesting Wollstonecraft fancied herself a heroine for helping her sister flee her husband's home. Todd suggests Wollstonecraft was an overbearing influence on her depressed and anxious sister, perhaps added more tension to an already strained marriage, and showed a shocking lack of foresight when planning the escape. She certainly succeeded in hiding their whereabouts, but thought little of how two "women unaccustomed to tiresome work could succeed" on their own with no trade, skill, or income to speak of (*Mary Wollstonecraft: A Revolutionary Life* 52). Todd surmises Meredith Bishop must have felt astonished at Eliza's disappearance, since he never assaulted, humiliated, threatened, or neglected her as other husbands did to other wives (50). Bishop was enough of the overbearing patriarch to remind Wollstonecraft of her despotic, drunk, moody, and abusive father; Todd points more to the psychology of Wollstonecraft than to the behavior of Bishop.

By contrast, a much earlier biographer, Elizabeth Robins Pennell in *Life of Mary Wollstonecraft* (1884), has no qualms about placing considerably more blame on Meredith Bishop, describing Eliza and Meredith's life as one of "daily quarrels and scenes of violence." Pennell discovers Bishop to be Wollstonecraft's

model for the "unprincipled sensualist, brute, and hypocrite" later crafted as the husband in *Wrongs of Woman* (37). Pennell achieves a graceful interweaving of biographical narrative and literary analysis as she retraces the formative events of Wollstonecraft's life. Her biography describes Wollstonecraft's exposure to several violent marriages, the constant migration forced upon the family by her intemperate and indolent father, her neglected education, her few but deeply formative friendships, her industrious self-motivated study, her constant poverty, and her witness to the "bestial squalor of the Irish peasantry" (79). Pennell's reflections upon the marital abuses, drudgeries, illnesses, difficult pregnancies, and deaths suffered by Wollstonecraft, her sisters, and her best friend Fanny Blood collectively develop into a careful, elegant thematic argument meant to demonstrate Wollstonecraft's motivation of pity, sense of moral righteousness, and inspiration toward justice and human rights advocacy.

Todd's and Pennell's biographies highlight the same significant events in Wollstonecraft's life, include the same surviving letters, and even understand her developmental years in a severe, authoritarian, and often abusive household as the foundation for her later life choices and political views. However, juxtaposing the biographers' approaches demonstrates two intertwined issues within Wollstonecraft scholarship. First, no other writer in eighteenth-century literary studies has had a more volatile and changeable reputation at the hands of critics. Second, critics have often been concerned more with the writer's life than her writing.

Pennell's sentimental style represents an era of late nineteenth-century redemption of the much-maligned Wollstonecraft. Though the biographer is no professional scholar, she is well aware of the notoriety that her compassionate portrayal redresses:

> Few women have worked so faithfully for the cause of humanity as Mary Wollstonecraft, and few have been the objects of such bitter censure. She devoted herself to the relief of her suffering fellow-beings with the ardor of Saint Vincent de Paul, and in return she was considered by them the moral scourge of God. Because she had the courage to express opinions new to her generation, and the independence to live according to her own standard of right and wrong, she was denounced as another Messalina. The young were bidden not to read her books, and the more mature warned not to follow her example, the miseries she endured being declared the just retribution of her actions. 1

Pennell's metaphors would be considered overwrought today, but her allusions directly reference conservative, misogynistic characterizations of Wollstonecraft that had repercussions for the author, her work, her contemporary female writers, and for later generations of feminists. Satires such as Richard Polwhele's "The Unsex'd Females" (1798) and Thomas James Mathias's "The Shade of Alexander Pope on the Banks of the Thames" (1800) manipulated Wollstonecraft's nonconformity to gender conventions, including her resistance to marriage and her bold political writing, to diminish the generally positive

view of her work and intimidate her women contemporaries from further political engagement. Barbara Taylor describes how Wollstonecraft's radical female colleagues, Mary Hays, Charlotte Smith, and Mary Robinson found themselves in a "delicate and troubling" predicament when the "chorus of condemnation" against Wollstonecraft tarnished their own public reputations as a result of their association with and defense of Wollstonecraft (247).

The anti-Jacobin writer Richard Polwhele attacks the radical politics of French Revolution sympathizers, the rationality of women in general, and especially the involvement of any woman in any overt political sphere. He does this through an extended metaphor of a war that pits radical, philosophically "democratic" women like Wollstonecraft, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, Mary Robinson, Charlotte Smith, Helen Maria Williams, Ann Yearseley, Mary Hays, Angelica Kauffman, and Emma Crewe against the "modest Virtue" of another group of women writers, including Elizabeth Montague, Elizabeth Carter, Hester Chapone, Anna Seward, Hester Thrale Piozzi, Francis Burney, Ann Radcliffe, Diana Beauclerk, and Hannah More—the "obedient throng" deserving "the nation's praise." Polwhele blames unfeminine behavior for undermining the family and thus destabilizing the entire nation.

Mathias proceeds similarly, but focuses on constructing a gender reversal between Wollstonecraft and her husband, William Godwin. An emasculated Godwin and an unfeminine Wollstonecraft are linked to the breaking of religious, "moral," and "political" "laws" that threaten to destroy the patriarchal

basis of the family and the nation (Mathias 51). Both these conservative writers figure radical women as agitators, threatening British society with the chaotic violence of the French Revolution. Polwhele, Mathias, and conservative magazines like the *European Review* yoke nascent feminism, revolutionary politics, and anti-British sentiment in their Anti-Jacobin agendas.

Such conservative writers used information from Godwin's overly candid portrayal of Wollstonecraft in his posthumous biography, *Memoirs of the Author of a Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1798). Pennell, Susan Gubar, Barbara Taylor, Mitzi Myers, and Don Locke are just some of the many scholars who have discussed the backlash against Wollstonecraft following her death and the unfortunate role Godwin's biography played. As Andrew Cayton phrases it, "The initial assault on Wollstonecraft and Godwin was utterly merciless" (*Love in the Time of Revolution* 185). Taylor explains further: "The decade after her death saw the publication of dozens of works – some authored by women, including erstwhile admirers and associates – satirizing her as an addlebrained fanatic addicted to utopian system-mongering while abusing or neglecting everyone around her" (28). Critics throughout the centuries have repeatedly held Godwin's biography to blame for the injury to Wollstonecraft's "intellectual reputation as well as her personal character" (Taylor 247), arguing that the injury done to Wollstonecraft deterred other women from more direct political engagement in their writing. Some have suggested that the brutal defamation

suffered by Wollstonecraft may have delayed the formal organization of the British women's suffrage movement for decades.

Pennell's somewhat overwrought biography contends with a hundred years of defamation as her work initiates a gradual reaffirmation of Wollstonecraft's intellectual contributions to political thought, feminist politics, and reform writing. In truth, scholarship on Mary Wollstonecraft would not advance until academic feminists in the 1970s and early 1980s made it their project to challenge the traditional literary canon for its almost total exclusion of women writers. However, feminist scholarship on this author in particular has shown an unprecedented preoccupation with redeeming her character through more than a dozen book-length biographies at the expense of more sustained engagement with her writing. For Virginia Woolf, that redemption took the form of sentimental descriptions of a passionate, feminine woman with a "reformer's love of humanity" (*The Second Common Reader*). Wollstonecraft later became the "foremother" of modern feminism (Thomas H. Ford 189) before early third-wave Marxist-feminists held Wollstonecraft up as the epitome of internalized sexism, ultimately an inadequate intellect and dubious role model. Despite more than a dozen book-length biographies, specific and sustained analysis of *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (and her other work) remained elusive.

The many biographical accounts show how critics past and present have long felt that Wollstonecraft incorporates her own lived experiences into her non-fictional and fictional work. *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* is arguably

semi-autobiographical in its focus on women's education, a field in which Wollstonecraft herself had worked as a governess, teacher, and author. She uses the term "education" in the broadest eighteenth-century sense of the word, which includes childrearing, employment, domestic life, moral-ethical instruction, as well as the specific subjects, facts, and knowledge that men and women ought to master and to which they ought to have equal access. In its own day, the work was by and large favorably reviewed, as Harriet Devine Jump describes: "Most reviewers took it to be a sensible treatise on female education and ignored those recommendations in the work that might unsettle the relations between the sexes." The *Analytical Review* found the text to be an "'elaborate *treatise of female education*'" even as it rather nebulously acknowledged the author's larger political concern regarding how corrupted education debauched the nation (*Mary Wollstonecraft and the Critics, 1788-2001, Volume* 1352). Jump astutely articulates a certain kind of political myopia within positive reviews of Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Woman,* which often defined the work narrowly.

By contrast, its detractors, such as *Anti-Jacobin* and *Critical Review*, acknowledged its political intention more fully, if only to ridicule its radical equal rights "doctrines" that logically allowed all men, "women or even children . . . to have an equal right to be governors and statesmen" (qtd. Jump 357). Such responses were ironically correct in their perception of the profound political implications of Wollstonecraft's work, even if they mocked and rejected those principles through logical conflation. It is also historically ironic that the equal

rights doctrine for which critics derided Wollstonecraft in the eighteenth century eventually came to be a contested subject within Wollstonecraft scholarship in the decades following the initial feminist recovery of her work.

Feminist literary scholars have been divided regarding the extent to which Wollstonecraft ought to be considered a radical or conservative writer. The division in scholarship reflects the division in academic feminism itself—a philosophical divide between liberal feminists and socialist feminists. The most dominant voices from the socialist-feminist camp have all found Wollstonecraft to ultimately represent a repressed, un-liberated, self-hating sexuality that actually aligns her with more conservative contemporaries.[10] They further contend that her feminist argument is limited at best and suspiciously aligned with bourgeois-democratic politics at worst. Turning to her work, these critics find Wollstonecraft's argument for women's education lacking in originality; her political theory "merely derivative of bourgeois male thinking;" and her entire career and corpus reflective of an inescapable misogyny that restricted her concerns to motherhood, domesticity, and the nursery (Thomas H. Ford 191; Sapiro 260).

The most notorious of these critical statements is Susan Gubar's article, "Feminist Misogyny: Mary Wollstonecraft and the Paradox of 'It Takes One to Know One'" (1994). This influential piece was profoundly damaging to Wollstonecraft scholarship, despite its main purpose to address issues within the

[10] Cora Kaplan, Timothy Reiss, Janet Todd, Mary Poovey, Barbara Taylor, Mitzi Myers, and Susan Gubar

academy itself. Gubar was in fact addressing 1990s criticism of academic feminists by African-American, queer, and Third-World feminists, labeling white academic feminists racist, homophobic, or neo-colonialist. The result was that some scholars read into Wollstonecraft's work the same politics for which they were being called to account. Such scholars wrongly held Wollstonecraft answerable for hundreds of years of socio-political developments and critiques that the author could never have been aware of during a time of only emergent liberal democratic theory; they also ignored significant ways in which she articulated doubts, for instance, about the professed ideals of the American Revolution belied by slavery[11].

My work primarily builds upon Virginia Sapiro's landmark book, *A Vindication of Political Virtue* (1992), which still stands as the most sustained study of Wollstonecraft's political theory. Sapiro rebuts underestimations and gross misrepresentations of Wollstonecraft to defend the author's work as indisputably radical; she especially challenges scholarship that claims Wollstonecraft neither perceived nor comprehended the larger social processes at work within her culture. Sapiro instead demonstrates Wollstonecraft's thorough analysis of several hierarchical systems of social organization aligned to create unnatural distinctions, differences of rank, wealth, race, and sex not inherent at birth but which influence the development of individuals beginning at birth.

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[11] See Susan Gubar's "Feminist Misogyny" (1994), Kora Kaplan's *Sea Changes* (1986), Joan B. Landes's *Women and the Public Sphere* (1988), Mitzi Myers's "Reform or Ruin" (1982), and Mary Poovey's *The Proper Lady and the Woman Writer* (1984).

"Wollstonecraft defined these different social relationships not simply as analogues but as systemically interrelated. She described a sociopolitical system in which the institutionalized self-interest of the powerful corrupts the society as a whole, including all the relationships within it and its operating values" (Sapiro 82). The author perceives acculturation processes, sees how various stratifications interconnect and overlap, deconstructs how they do so, and proposes a widespread restructuring of all kinds of socioeconomic relationships and arrangements.

Sapiro asserts that Wollstonecraft seeks to correct the disparities that undermine each individual's physical and moral development to result in a dissolute society. The author, she argues, was never mystified by bourgeois liberalism. Even if her political tendencies align with some liberal values, Wollstonecraft often criticizes liberal economic interests. For instance, the author's two *Vindications* reveal a sharp skepticism about the immoderate pursuit of wealth for its power to perpetuate those same debasing "unnatural distinctions" existent in the hereditary honors of property, primogeniture, and aristocratic entitlement (Wollstonecraft 44). Sapiro thus articulates Wollstonecraft's rejection of social hierarchies and their supporting legal and economic institutions that coerced obedience and servitude. Even parental and familial relationships that enforce subjection are suspect as immoral and dangerous to humanity. For Sapiro, Wollstonecraft extends the core discourse of individual rights much further than her fellow radical theorists, consistently

arguing for equality and liberty in terms of their moral necessity for both individual autonomy and national participation. Sapiro thus contends that Wollstonecraft is important for "feminist history" and also for "debates over the development of democratic theory" (xxi).

Connections and Chapter Overview

The most radical of my texts, Cugoano's *Thoughts and Sentiments*, occupies the most disregarded position in history—a clear reflection of the politics of the canon that affects scholarship even today as postcolonial and race scholars work to reaffirm the crucial need to study subaltern statements against Western, colonial aggression. Wollstonecraft inhabits a moderately less neglected station, never fully forgotten but often remembered notoriously, held up as example for that which woman ought not endeavor—public engagement in socio-political civic debate. Finally, Godwin, the writer whose identity is least marginal, only gained provisional canonical acceptance when his anarchist philosophy underlying *Caleb Williams* was expunged from critical view. One recurrent theme emerges: marginalization. My primary texts represent marginalized peoples; they have been marginalized from the traditional literary canon; and they remain isolated from each other, since current sub-disciplines within the field of literary studies do not place them in dialogue together.

While the interpretations reviewed above understand that each author is concerned with social transformation on behalf of the most oppressed populations of the late eighteenth century, the notion of social justice is always

assumed, never defined. Repeatedly, scholarly analyses conflate social justice with political ideologies. Some critics equate democratic values to social justice, reading for evidence that the writer supported majority rule against the rule of an aristocratic elite, pushing for legal equality, if not class equality, and free elections held so the people can limit government power. Meanwhile, republican ideals inform critics' searches for values like constitutionally protected rights for the individual against majority rule and individual rights to liberty, religion, and property. Scholars tracing capitalist principles look for evidence supporting private business ownership for profit, free trade without government interference, merit-based and class mobility that is color-blind and gender-blind, and statements in support of the autonomous economic choices of the individual. Meanwhile, those tracing socialist values investigate how the writers support the fairer distribution of wealth, support collective and communal property, argue for more egalitarian class or rank arrangements, find religion suspect, demand equal and universal access to basic sustenance, and likewise petition for equal, or at least reasonable, access to all the valued goods of society—education, voting, government seats and other abstract items through which any social member develops self-worth and participates in sociopolitical decisions.

Scholarship on these three authors collectively, convincingly, and often inadvertently demonstrates that each writer's political alignments actually cut across all of these organized sets of principles. Some critics have found this

hybridity to be a mark of failure, but the best scholarship, by Sandiford, Kelly, and Sapiro, recognizes this hybridity as evidence of the complexity of late eighteenth-century politics and interventionist work. Unfortunately, no study has ever defined exactly what constitutes either social injustice or social justice. I draw on multiple disciplines concerned with justice and injustice to devise an applied method of literary analysis for texts of the eighteenth century. I view a dialectical form of social justice activism as a corrective to the confusion and schism inherent to generally political readings. I argue that each writer is less concerned with pushing any single political ideology or economic system. Rather, their similar hybridity is motivated by correctives to injustice; in other words, they address injustice first and foremost, and political leanings occur incidentally or secondarily.

The notion of hybridity characterizes these texts in both political and literary domains. Clifford Siskin's *The Work of Writing* (1998) allows me to understand how hybridity became a political issue in and of itself in this period. Siskin's book is not about social justice; rather, it tracks the transformation of writing from a new technology in the early decades of eighteenth century to its configuration as a professional discipline by the Romantic period. He examines the relationship between eighteenth-century technological changes in print culture that made the unprecedented mass production of writing possible; the ensuing cultural anxieties provoked by the volume, variety, and diversity of writers and readers; and the subsequent reactions that led to "*disciplinarity*."

This term designates the manner in which the hitherto "*Dunciad*-like excess" of "new generic combinations" came to coalesce into narrower fields of knowledge coded by distinct methodologies and conventions in order to control the "proliferation of writing" that "threatened eighteenth-century Britain" (17-19). Siskin finds generic, disciplinary, and professional distinctions emerging into our recognizably modern form by the 1830s (14). Accompanying the compartmentalization of diverse writing into distinct disciplines were the connected developments of professionalization and education that authorized and authenticated experts, as managers, for each discipline. Within a few decades, between 1780 and 1830, this process of constriction excluded some of those diverse voices and hybrid texts from what came to be understood as the literary (14).

Siskin's research is not about social justice. However, what he articulates is a process of conjoint literary and political injustice as what Nancy Fraser calls "nonrecognition": a silencing of writers whose identities, opinions, and works defied the new and narrower limits of the literary text as a non-critical, generically conventional, and professionally rendered work of art (Fraser 6). Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin write at the beginning of Siskin's time frame. They write at a peculiar moment in literary history when what we would call "interdisciplinary" writing flourishes and is available to the female advocate, the abolitionist African, and the anarchist novelist. Their work combines political criticism and literary artistry for the purpose of social intervention.

They view their writing as potentially socio-politically transformative to unjust social structures and for the victims of injustice they represent. Activist writing wants to make visible daily acts of injury, the immorality of social actors who inflict that injury, and the systemic and structural causes that create the conditions by which injurious behavior can occur in the first place. Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin are agitators in an agitated historical moment. From the viewpoint of anti-abolitionists, anti-Jacobins, and antifeminists, each author wields "the potentially disruptive power of the technology of writing" and therefore becomes one of those "strange, mad, … or suicidal," "supposedly disruptive personalities" threatening to social order (Siskin 15). Siskin compellingly declares that the project of disciplinarity wanted to make writing "*safe*," and the "exclusion of women" was just one way it did so. My review of previous scholarship on these three figures reveals how the same process of exclusion also silenced Cugoano and scorned Godwin (26). Silencing their champions implicitly silences, or at least attempts to silence, the oppressed multitude on the level of visible, cultural representation.

In keeping with the theme of hybridity, my work is fundamentally interdisciplinary. I organize my chapters thematically, and I study each text comparatively. My decisions here are primarily driven by the texts themselves, but I am indebted to Amartya Sen's *The Idea of Justice* (2009) for my insight about how the eighteenth-century rhetorical technique of "plural grounding" coincides with my activist concept of dialectical social justice. The comparative elements of

my work always center on the similar literary themes, techniques, tones, and metaphors through which the writers address injustice via specifically literary devices. But Sen's work helps be understand the writers' comparative methodology for assessing actual social problems. Sen posits a reality-based mode of applied philosophy that concerns itself with current cultural conditions and social issues, which he calls comparative justice. Like John Rawls in his landmark book, *A Theory of Justice* (1971), Sen founds his work on that of historical figures from the eighteenth century, such as Adam Smith, Jeremey Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and Mary Wollstonecraft, philosophers from the comparative tradition who make it their task to assess the actual societies in which they live, or as Godwin would put it, "things as they are" (7). They seek to rectify "manifest injustice" by articulating wrongs and proposing "feasible" solutions to those wrongs by addressing the "actual behavior of people" and "actual institutions" (Sen 7). Sen notably includes Wollstonecraft in this tradition; I extend his categorization to include Godwin's *Things as They Are* and Cugoano's *Thoughts and Sentiments*. Sen's disposition helps orient my three primary texts as comparative rather than transcendent, reality-based rather than solely theoretical, feasible rather than abstract.

Wollstonecraft, Cugoano and Godwin display, describe, or demand practical and achievable solutions to urgent social problems through "pluralistic" means (Sen 2). I call their methodology dialectical for engaging top-down and bottom-up interventions. Sen's definition of "plural grounding" establishes how

eighteenth-century rhetorical strategy indeed lends itself to dialectical analysis. The method of plural grounding uses "a number of different lines of condemnation, without seeking an agreement on their relative merits" (2). Sen refers to this rhetorical technique in the context of Edmund Burke's wide-ranging reasons for impeaching Warren Hastings for crimes against humanity in his colonial governance of India, which scholars have sometimes found to be logically contradictory. Burke's pluralistic indictments against Hastings demonstrate for Sen the statesman's discernment of the multifarious ways in which social injustice violates people through many processes and institutions and utilizes any line of reasoning needed to justify its motives and actions.

The only fitting response is a similar pluralistic argumentation that attacks manifold injustice in the same manner—by any and all available means. As Sen explains, "What is important to note here, as central to the idea of justice, is that we can have a strong sense of injustice on many different grounds, and yet not agree on any one particular ground as *the* dominant reason for the diagnosis of injustice" (2). Sen finds inspiration for his work in eighteenth-century debates on colonial crime and women's rights, in the activism of Burke and the political philosophy of Wollstonecraft. As I lift terminology from Sen's work to explain the historical basis of my own, it is imperative to remember that he has appropriated eighteenth-century methods. He, like Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin before him, emphasizes social injustice as the bottom-up entry point for working upward toward just solutions; like the authors, he represents diverse

viewpoints rather than overarching theory; and like the authors, he embraces the pluralistic mode of argumentation needed to combat plural injustice. Plural grounding becomes dialectical when the writers and Sen combat social injustice through the manifold and interconnected ways in which injustice operates against its victims by oppressing them in systemic ways and by devaluing their identities. In other words, social injustice dialectically attacks victims through macro-level systems like economy, religion, government, class, and the law as well as through micro-level interactions, those everyday, face-to-face instances in which individuals or small groups are routinely disrespected, devalued, threatened, or abused. Perhaps it is the shared history of violence framed within a dialectical methodology that allows each writer the capacity to attend to the specific contexts and concerns of women, Africans, or workers, while also positing similar interventions for wider social change that empathically reach across narrower group identifications.

While Sen is invaluable for identifying fundamental rhetorical approaches of the writers and for orienting my own work, I structure my chapters on the domains of social injustice identified by Bufacchi and then analyze their social justice interventions by applying political theorist Nancy Fraser's descriptions of activist responses that she organizes under the terms "the politics of recognition" and "the politics of redistribution." Like Sen, Fraser calls for a pluralistic mode of academic research that unites these two common domains for social and political action. Her essay, "Social Injustice in the Age of Identity Politics: Redistribution,

Recognition, and Participation" (1996), attempts to reconcile a disagreement within the discipline of political theory regarding the best practices for social change. An older tradition of Marxist-inspired "egalitarian redistribution" with its focus on resources and economy has given way to identity politics. Identity politics, of race or gender for instance, currently prevails in political philosophy and favors strategies of recognition that prioritize creating a "difference-friendly world, where assimilation to majority or dominant cultural norms is no longer the price of equal respect" (Fraser 3). Academics are "polarized" between the politics of recognition and the politics of redistribution—between maintaining identity distinctions and attempting to foster horizontal equality valued on sameness.

Fraser calls this polarization a "false antithesis" (4, 6). She argues for a complementary process, a "'bivalent' conception of justice that can accommodate both defensible claims for social equality and defensible claims for the recognition of difference" (4-5). Through close reading, my work demonstrates how Cugoano, Wollstonecraft, and Godwin each establish that women, workers, and slaves occupy bivalent "oppressed collectivities" which concurrently suffer from "both maldistribution and misrecognition" (22). I divide my chapters according to these domains. Chapter Two examines how the authors articulate the ways in which women, workers, and slaves have been unjustly maligned on the basis of who they are—what Bufacchi calls "injustice as exclusion" (10). Chapter Three shifts focus to examine how the writers grapple with injustice that

creates social subordination through the denial of social, economic, or political resources, or what Bufacchi calls "injustice as maldistribution" (9-10). Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin once again display their plural, or dialectical, mode in their complementary methodology that attends to both exclusionary and maldistributive injustice and the relationship between these dimensions.

Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin juxtapose the lived realities for women, workers, or slaves against eighteenth-century doctrines of social cooperation, like paternalism or patriarchalism, and their supporting institutions. Literary scholars have primarily approached each text by its relationship to current subdivisions within literary studies that align with particularized fields of identity politics. Critical race critics attend to Cugoano's protest against the slave trade through the theoretical frameworks of critical race theory and postcolonial studies. Feminist scholars have focused on either the emotional, biographical elements in Wollstonecraft's writing, or the political and rhetorical argumentation of her work. Godwin critics are similarly split between reading *Caleb Williams* in relation to the generic development of the novel, and a New Historicist understanding of the novel in relation to the late eighteenth century and the French Revolution. Academic subdivisions have prevented these three texts from being brought together, and have consequently missed the writers' broader insights about how authority subjugates masses of people in corresponding, systemic patterns. Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin may

illustrate injustice by often attending to the specific contexts of women, workers, and slaves. However, they also move outside these identity concerns to compare the shared experiences of injustice across these diverse populations.

The diverse sub-disciplines of academic feminism, critical race studies, Marxist criticism, postcolonial studies, and the now not so New Historicism are all concerned with how my primary texts emerge as socially engaged, politically progressive, and culturally interventionist literatures. All of these fields, therefore, are implicitly interested in social justice. However, there has never been an articulation of exactly what social justice is and does. Bufacchi addresses a related problem within his field of political philosophy, which abounds with social justice formulations despite the almost total absence of work on social injustice. For example, Bufacchi discovers a shared but embedded assumption between the work of Sen and Rawls. Both prolific scholars have vaguely and circularly assumed social injustice to be the absence of justice: "if injustice is the shadow of justice, then our understanding of injustice depends entirely on one's preferred conception of justice" (2). He illustrates the logical problem and socioeconomic ramifications of contingent justice by pairing typical models of justice with their inverted concepts of injustice. If justice is "to each the same thing," then "arbitrary inequality" becomes unjust. If justice is "each according to their merit," then "lack of meritocracy" becomes unjust. If justice is "each according to their needs," then "disregard for poverty" becomes unjust (2). It is easy to agree with each of these principles. Indeed, progressive literary scholars,

political philosophers, and social activists have addressed social injustice through all of them, and so do Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin.

What happens, however, when we approach injustice through frameworks with which we are less likely to agree, but which systematically informed societies of the past? If justice is "each according to their race," then "equality of opportunity" becomes unjust. If justice is "each according to their rank," then "social mobility" becomes unjust (Bufacchi 2). As it happens, Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin write at a time in which these latter concepts of justice are the dominant ones. The formula of justice as "each according to their rank" has particular resonance here, since, as Roxann Wheeler has shown, race and rank have close parallels in the eighteenth century (*The Complexion of Race*, 2000). Bufacchi, drawing upon the work of Chaim Perelman, explains how the principle of "each according to their rank" is in fact "an aristocratic formula of justice" that "divides society into "'widely separated'" categories and does not regard the "'intrinsic'" value of "'the individual'" (3). Policies or proposals that "aim to improve social mobility or promote equality," then become injustices according to the aristocratic viewpoint. Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin challenge aristocratic models of social organization that divide society according to strict hierarchical groupings of rank, sex, and race.

Bufacchi inverts the approach to social justice by arguing that social injustice must take "primary" attention (3). My writers do the same. They illustrate injustice by displaying the "grievous wrongs" inflicted upon women,

workers, and slaves made possible by existent social arrangements. All three authors pursue social justice, but they have a peculiar method of arriving at their arguments for social reform. They deploy the technology of writing to make visible daily acts of injustice inflicted upon specific subdivisions of the community but which recur in the interrelated patterns of maldistribution, exclusion, and violence (Siskin 17, Bufacchi 9-10). Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin thus put the experience of the individuals at the center of their analyses and work through those experiences upward to systemic causes. To summarize, these three late-eighteenth-century writers engage similar rhetorical strategies within the dialectical mode when measuring ideals against realities; demanding recognition and redistribution; and devising resistance tactics that extend not only beyond typical literary areas, but also beyond the current disciplinary divisions of political philosophy, political theory, and social activism, even as all these disciplines consider issues of social justice.

CHAPTER II

DEFINING INJUSTICE AS EXCLUSION AND MORAL INDIGNITY

The traditional canon has been just one way in which literature has been a means for cultural and social control, limiting the texts and authors deemed worthy of study, for instance by denying the aesthetic value of the popular novels and treatises written by women in the eighteenth century, as in Wollstonecraft's case; or by rebuffing the political novels of the same period, as happened to Godwin and the other Jacobin novelists; or by altogether excluding from literary history the slave narratives and protest statements by Black Atlantic writers like Cugoano. The very politics of canon has reflected the wider social prejudices against such writers as Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin to the extent that it excluded them from serious concern along with so many other diverse voices, thus omitting from historical understanding the actual range of writing and ways of knowing that could more fully and accurately embody eighteenth-century literature as an expression of culture and mode of political debate.

One unifying pattern across the historical treatment of each author has been a shaming process centered on both the politics and the identities of each writer, expressed as backlash, regret, or omission. That devaluation is social injustice as exclusion, or the denial of human worth which includes disrespecting intellectual contributions made by persons or groups designated as inferior. Injustice as exclusion includes the denigration of particularized identities and

social roles, the denial of human potential and capacity for persons occupying those social positions, and the silencing of the opinions and experiences of persons from those assigned, subordinate stations. As I describe in more detail below, Bufacchi's and Fraser's descriptions of injustice as exclusion suggest that this form of social injustice often operates through cultural representation, by denying the human worthiness of certain populations by employing various bodies of knowledge simultaneously (i.e. religion, history, literature, visual art, pseudoscience) to construct that inferior status and normalize disrespectful, dehumanizing social behaviors that reinforce subordination.

If exclusion must be understood as a form of social injustice, as Bufacchi suggests, then canonical omission must also be understood as a form of social injustice that stretches across the centuries, infiltrating the intellectual milieus that connect the past to the present. For example, the problem of canonical exclusion was taken up by Felicity A. Nussbaum and Laura Brown, and the scholars included in their collection of polemical essays, *The New Eighteenth Century: Theory, Politics, and English Literature* (1988). They introduced their collection by arguing that eighteenth-century literary studies subsumed into critical practice the very same partialities of eighteenth-century literary and cultural politics. They subsequently proposed a greater interdisciplinary and pluralistic approach to reading texts of this period, and they proposed more general acceptance of then new modes of reading through feminist, psychoanalytic, new-historicist, Marxist, and deconstructive theories to display

what a more pluralistic literary practice might look like. Without a doubt, those approaches to reading, along with the more current practices of critical race theory and post-colonialism, have brought the work of Cugoano, Wollstonecraft, and Godwin into view. Each separate body of literary scholarship has combated the different means by which Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, or Godwin has been marginalized from the canon. In bringing these texts back into critical view, academics simultaneously combat the defamation of authorial identity and the devaluation of the populations the authors represent. Scholarship focused on canon revision must therefore be understood as work for social justice within an intellectual and cultural sphere which has the reformist view to more accurately and empathically preserve the diverse voices and perspectives of the past.

But the authors themselves did the same social justice work within their own lifetimes and writing careers. By representing the problems and perspectives of women, workers, and slaves, Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin advocate the revaluation of demeaned groups. They also knowingly combat the depreciation of their own identities. Bufacchi adopts into his description of social injustice as exclusion the admirable work of Miranda Fricker. He highlights her definition of exclusion as "epistemic injustice," a focus that shifts scholars away from defining injustice solely in terms of "'how'" resources are distributed to a focus on "'to whom'" those resources are offered. For Fricker, epistemic injustice manifests, for example, as "testimonial injustice" in which "someone is wronged specifically in their capacity as a knower. When

a speaker or narrator receives less credibility than they otherwise would have, they are being wronged, to the extent that they are being undermined, insulted, and not treated with proper respect *qua* subject of knowledge" (13). Wollstonecraft's supposed incapacity for balancing style with rhetoric; the suspicion that Cugoano, a black African, could actually write such a powerful abolitionist work on his own; and the view that Godwin could not comprehend his own narrative developments are all instances of belittling each author's competence as a writer; and the pervasive embarrassment for each writer's politics undermines each author as a knowledgeable speaker about his or her society.

Deflections against each writer's talent combined with the defamatory political backlashes that each suffered means that they all experienced, admittedly to varying degrees, testimonial injustice. For Cugoano, an African, and Wollstonecraft, a woman, the claiming of public voice and assertion of cultural authority in nonfictional political prose are direct acts of protest that declare their right to public voice and proclaim their rational capacity through the formal, intellectual act of writing. As a white male writer, Godwin's act of writing is a more mediated protest action. His giving complex and dynamic voice to a lower-class, first-person narrator, however, emulates the more direct demand for public and political expression found in the work of Wollstonecraft and Cugoano. Through the voice of his narrator, Caleb Williams, Godwin recreates the public testimonial akin to the slave narrative that articulates a

personal history of lost innocence, capture, persecution, and unceasing oppression. In short, each writer protests injustice as exclusion and attempts to revalue the maligned identities of women, workers, or slaves by working through their first-person perspectives which give public voice to a maligned identity. They also confront other texts that misrepresent the inner attributes of women, workers, or slaves and denigrate the social roles and contributions of those groups.

As suggested by the above reference to Fricker's work, one way in which exclusionary injustice occurs is by invalidating the subject's very capacity to "know." The writers challenge this supposed incapacity as it manifests in postulations of natural inferiority then results in subsequent demands by the socially dominant for inferiors to be relegated to less esteemed social roles. Perhaps most provocatively, each writer especially challenges "moral exclusion," the belief that women, workers, and slaves lack full moral capacity as individual subjects (Susan Opotow "Moral Exclusion and Injustice: An Introduction," 1990; 1). Translating Susan Opotow's notion of "moral exclusion" into eighteenth-century philosophical terms like those expressed in Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), moral exclusion can mean that women, workers, or slaves are thought to be unable to develop moral sentiment, or the crucial balance between reason and passion that is the hallmark of the fully developed and dignified human being. This balance demarcates an eighteenth-century notion of human dignity because it distinguishes the human from the brute

which is neither able to reason or exhibit the finer emotional attitudes of personal reflection or sympathy.

Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin all write from the first-person perspective, and they display an emotional and analytical range considered atypical for the female, slave, or servant subject. They similarly engage a redolent tone of indignation against daily incidents of mistreatment, they subsequently compose passages that exhibit moments of internal reflection, and then they complement these rhetorical movements with a display of rationality denoted by extensive cultural analysis and textual deconstruction. In so doing, they forward an implicit claim for human dignity by presenting the point-of-view of a woman, a slave, or a servant that appeals to an eighteenth-century ideal of moral sentiment. Thus, one key supposition of this chapter is that the authors are always combating testimonial injustice in two ways. First, when Wollstonecraft writes as a woman, Cugoano as a slave, and Godwin's Caleb as a servant, they belie the intellectual devaluation characteristic of epistemic injustice and moral exclusion by broadcasting exactly those intellectual, moral, and emotional capacities supposedly unavailable to women, slaves, or workers.

Second, claiming public voice as a woman, as a slave, or as a servant rebels against the silencing characteristic of exclusionary injustice, silencing that attempts to delegitimize the perspectives of all women, slaves, or workers by suppressing public address or by expecting subordinates to allow their supposed betters to speak or act on their behalf instead of for themselves. When the

authors choose the first-person perspective, they give voice to largely voiceless populations. More importantly, the authors use the first-person perspective as a vehicle for bottom-up social critique, in effect overturning an otherwise devalued identity into a position of strength, a source of special knowledge based on direct experience. Each author employs first-person perspective to craft the writing persona or narrator of his or her text into an insider-expert that effectively rejects authoritarian, outsider theories about the groups with which the authors, or narrator in Godwin's case, identify.

The next goal this chapter is to examine how the writers protest exclusionary injustice in the cultural domain through their interventions against derogatory portrayals of workers, slaves, and women in other novels, ethnographic description, and the conduct book. Cugoano offers a point-by-point rejection and correction of racialist ethnography and proslavery rhetoric. Wollstonecraft deconstructs the species logic of conduct literature that asks women to collude in the denial of their own human capacity. Godwin defies the discriminatory generic convention of the simpleminded and suspect stock servant character. Wollstonecraft and Cugoano directly confront and deconstruct the debasing arguments of specifically targeted texts; Godwin's defiance of generic convention means that his novel works in a more implicit, intertextual manner.

Although writing in different genres themselves and targeting different genres of texts for intervention, one core feature unites the authors' goals and the

writings that they scrutinize. The texts under my authors' scrutiny attempt to define, or represent, the inferior *character* of the African, the woman, or the servant. As Elaine M. McGirr expounds in her book *Eighteenth-Century Characters: A Guide to the Literature of the Age* (2007), the character sketch "was "something of a craze in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England . . . Characters also left the sketch book and found their way into sermons, periodicals, drama, novels, and poetry: the character permeated eighteenth-century literature" (3). Writing that concentrated on describing the relationship between "external description and the inner man" and then prescribing appropriate social behavior "helped contemporary readers map appearances to essences, to correlate fiction and reality. The 'character' taught readers how to interpret the world and what values to attach to different classes or types of people" (4). Writing "taught contemporary readers what to think of their neighbours and themselves," thus serving a didactic and social role off the page into the larger social environment by providing interpretive strategies and behavioral recommendations for daily interactions (2).

McGirr asserts the power of writing to influence actual human behavior. Thus, eighteenth-century writing can be implicated in influencing day-to-day, social interactions. This power does not bode well for those individuals or groups held in disdain, contempt, or ridicule. Writing could encourage daily maltreatment, or "moral exclusion" in its second manifestation: "moral exclusion occurs when individuals or groups are perceived as outside the boundary in

which moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply." Not only are undermined groups perceived as lacking moral capacity internally, they are occluded from receiving the respect that is reserved for more privileged members of the same society. As Opotow further explains, "morally excluded" populations "are perceived as nonentities, expendable, or underserving," therefore they suffer harm that is normalized, or deemed "appropriate" or "acceptable" (1). Thus, moral exclusion as a specific manifestation of social injustice as exclusion operates in two directions: it first defines groups of people as essentially inferior, and it subsequently excuses, on that basis, harmful behaviors and cultural representations predicated on that preconceived disrespect.

Opotow's explanation coincides with Bufacchi's description of exclusionary injustice that operates by creating the conditions that allow injustice to occur on the level of day-to-day interactions, in which one social actor fails to recognize the human value of another social actor;" on a wider scale, entire groups of excluded persons stand to receive fewer social "benefits" even while they carry considerable social "burdens" (11). Oftentimes, as my writers will articulate, those very social roles and burdens are held in derision. Moral exclusion is one specific manifestation of how injustice as exclusion functions via a blaming-the-victim circular logic. First exclusionary injustice posits erroneous notions of innate inferiority, for instance by positing the innate immorality of women, workers, or slaves, whose incapacities subsequently require greater

social regulation. But moral exclusion also creates a broader, more pervasive social contempt for those misrepresented victims that damages them still further through the sanctioning of daily abuse. The authors object to writing that characterizes the woman, the slave, or the worker as physically, culturally, or morally inept to devalue that identity, and they also object to writing that promotes cultural contempt to prescribe further maltreatment.

My authors, like literary scholars today, recognize writing as a cultural battle ground for or against injustice that operates through symbolic representation. To analyze their work, I apply Bufacchi's description of exclusionary injustice as it intersects with Nancy Fraser's concept of "the politics of recognition." I examine how the authors understand the ways in which women, workers, or slaves suffer injustice based on the devaluation of their identities through symbolic representation which translates into degrading day-to-day interactions. Bufacchi provides the descriptive theoretical framework for differentiating three domains of social injustice of which exclusion is just one domain particularly focused on identity. But he makes ample use of Fraser's work on social injustice that also studies the deprecation of identity and which falls under her rubric "the politics of recognition." Fraser's term, "the politics of recognition," reflects her practical interventionist focus on first labeling the specific forms injustice related to devalued identity can take and the subsequent, strategies combatants deploy against that devaluation. I use Bufacchi's term "injustice as exclusion" as a broad theoretical category, while I engage Fraser's

terms under "the politics of recognition" to pinpoint and label the specific form of exclusionary injustice that each writer challenges.

Fraser's specificity is especially apt to analyzing the rhetoric of historical texts as case studies.[12] It is Fraser who most thoroughly articulates how exclusionary injustice operates through different forms of deleterious representation at the "cultural" level:

> The politics of recognition … targets injustices it understands as cultural, which it presumes to be rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication. Examples include cultural domination (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one's own); nonrecognition (being rendered invisible via the authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretative practices of one's culture); and disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life interactions). 7

Activists against social injustice as exclusion practice "the politics of recognition" through two basic strategies to contest these three forms of exclusionary

[12]As political philosopher, Bufacchi mainly hopes to devise a descriptive theory for measuring social injustice—to isolate, define, describe, and formulate the core concepts of social injustice as philosophical theory, sifting out of his model historically entrenched biases and case studies as much as possible. By contrast, Fraser, as political theorist, begins from the historically and culturally entrenched viewpoint, looking at specific case studies of forms of injustice and studying the effectiveness of actual corrective procedures.

injustice. The first approach rejects essentialist theories and views social divisions as culturally created. Fittingly, they seek to "deconstruct" the "binary oppositions" that create "hierarchical" valuations between social groups. In the process of revealing the ways in which culture fabricates differences that are not inherent, activists using this intervention want to dismantle "the very terms" by which group devaluations "are currently elaborated." Meanwhile, some activists may accept that innate differences conjoin essential group identity. However, they view the "variations" of humanity as intrinsically "benign." Like the first strategists, adherents of essentialism still locate devaluation of difference in culture. Innocuous variances are "maliciously" abased to, once again, manufacture social "hierarchy" (10). Activists from this perspective "seek to celebrate, not eliminate group differences" to create "a difference-friendly world" (10, 3). I explore how each writer protests exclusionary injustice through these specific strategies, examining how they treat oppositional and often essentialist definitions of women, workers, or slaves and how they attempt to revalorize those group identities.

Taking its name from Frederick Douglass's original anti-slavery newspaper, the leftist-activist website, *The North Star*, recently published an article, "What's Wrong with Identity Politics (and Intersectionality Theory)? A Response to Mark Fisher's 'Exiting the Vampire Castle' And Its Critics" (December 2, 2013), that attempts to explain some weaknesses of identity politics for effecting social change. Marxists disagree with identity politics for observing

"static," unnaturally assigned categories that fail to liberate individuals or groups from those socioeconomically "alienated" identities; in seeking equality with privileged social groups, identity politics fails because it does not seek to escape the essentialism of identity itself. Identity groups do so by too often defining the characteristics that regulate group inclusion in opposition to other social groups with which it competes, "continually falling back on *difference* in order to establish group identity and cohesion" (Michael Rectenwald). Identity groups define the fundamental features for members included in the group and which attributes delineate those who must be excluded from membership. However, the socialism of the first half of the twentieth century was a "miserable failure" for also relying on its own "reductionist" "policing of the category of the working class" that led to "fragmentation" and "stagnation." He blames the failures of socialism for the current prevalence of identity politics today, which includes the unsuccessful experiment of intersectionality theory.

The theories of injustice upon which I draw seek to rectify the error of either/or essentialism just as the writers themselves employ dialectical analytic strategies to examine "subjective experiences," to "denaturalize identity categories," and to interrogate the ways in which identities are assigned "from above." Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin by and large avoid the essentialist trap that Rectenwald suggests of more current identity and Marxist politics because these writers always perceive how identity is handed down from above. They understand identity as a dynamic interplay between internal

subjectivity, cultural esteem, and social role, the definitions and assignations of which have largely if not wholly been wrested from the control of women, workers, or slaves. I contend that their similar perspective translates into parallel protests against social injustice; protesting injustice strategically deflects the need to defend identity and, rather, allows each writer to interrogate and deconstruct how identity has come about by the suspect actions and motives of the oppressor. Authorial interrogations of injustice empower them to go beyond merely "describing" identity to investigate how subjective experiences in and of the world reflect the "distribution and hierarchy" of their "social locations" and question how "different kinds of [social] construction" can alter identity (Linda Martin Alcoff, Michael Hames-García, Satya P. Mohanty, & Paula M. L. Moya, *Identity Politics Reconsidered*, 2006; 6).

I transform Fraser's examples into the guiding themes for each of my primary texts, pairing one writer to one form of exclusion. In *Thoughts and Sentiments*, Cugoano challenges the injustice of African slavery by deconstructing the cultural domination communicated in British proslavery publications. To combat the hostile interpretations of African peoples by the imperially dominant he corrects racialist misinformation posited in proslavery texts that claim African inferiority in terms of moral and emotional difference, such as the African's supposed incapacity for reason or intellectual accomplishment and the African's supposed lack of sentiment in the form of familial, kinship, or community attachments. Cugoano also debunks proslavery rhetoric that claims cultural

difference located in claims of African underdevelopment in socioeconomic structures like government, trade, technology, or modern infrastructure. He revalorizes African identity through his first-person persona, deploying his African birthright as a social location of cultural authority from which he derives insider knowledge about African peoples and cultures that white apologists for slavery cannot claim. But, he also employs his hybrid identity as a former free African, former enslaved African "in the West but not of the West," and as a free British subject now rewriting both the categories of African and European in terms of shared values that decompose oppositional definitions of either identity category (Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousnes*s 2).

Next, I pair Wollstonecraft and exclusionary injustice as nonrecognition. This form of exclusion poses considerably greater challenges to reading since it is, by definition, a form of injustice based on invisibility. Indeed, Wollstonecraft seems to perceive this very problem, apparent in her own linguistic choices that resonate with Fraser's description of nonrecognition as "being rendered invisible" (7). Wollstonecraft writes, "women, in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes" to reflect how any essentialist claim about the capacity of woman is always erroneous given the limitless social, cultural, and economic structures that relegate woman to an inferior social position, all of which have been founded on the "hasty conclusion" of woman's essential inferiority (71). She thus astutely perceives the cyclic nature of injustice and famously "throws down her gauntlet" as challenge to those edifices (119).

She dares her male readers and the several authoritarian figures she directly addresses to reverse the order of things, to first prove woman's essential difference by first evening out the odds stacked against her. For Wollstonecraft, identity is inseparable from environment. Therefore, her work is always simultaneously speaking about injustice as exclusion and injustice as maldistribution, which is the topic of my next chapter. Nevertheless, I highlight how she utilizes Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments* in her comparative deconstruction of the socialization and educative processes for women. Wollstonecraft strategically adopts this model to contrast it to the ways in which girls are raised to show how women are deliberately occluded from developing those prized attributes of reason and moral conscience that define human dignity for her culture.

Last, I examine Godwin's challenge to exclusionary injustice as disrespect. I pick up Fraser's notion of stereotyping as it intersects with the literary concept of the stock character, which is by very definition a stereotype as an oft-used, easily recognizable, literary and cultural archetype demarcated by flatness and predictable motivations. The novel was the new genre of the eighteenth century, but many of the stock characters had already been established in the character sketch which had been a popular genre unto itself since the seventeenth century beginning with Joseph Hall's *Characters of Virtues and Vices*, as McGirr explains (3). The rake, the country maid, the fop, the noble highwayman, the coquette, the country gentleman, the bluestocking, the female wit, the cit (citizen of the

world), and the noble savage, are just some of the popular stock character types from the eighteenth century that McGirr studies. However, she notes that the popularity of character types changed over the course of the century, as did trends in authorial treatment of them. Since character and culture share such a synergistic relationship, which stock type an author selects and how an author treats that stock character according to expectation or in defiance of it serves as "an index" to the cultural influence an author seeks to wield through the reading audience (4).

I explore the ways in which Godwin's portrayal of his protagonist, Caleb Williams, defies the generic convention of the stock servant character. McGirr does not study representations of servants, but her work intersects with Julie Nash's sustained study of the stock servant character and the derogatory stereotypes inherent to eighteenth-century and early nineteenth-century representations of servants in her book, *Servants and Paternalism in the Works of Maria Edgeworth and Elizabeth Gaskell* (2013). Nash explores how Edgeworth and Gaskell defy two conflicting, long-maintained "literary stereotypes" with the servant as either "blindly faithful domestic family retainer" or the servant as "selfishly scheming family destroyer" (4). Common to both stereotypes is a stock servant character who inhabits a marginal place in the narrative and lacks a "private life" of human depth, psychological complexity, emotional range, and interior transformation. Godwin makes Caleb Williams his protagonist and retrospective narrator, and the author centralizes the experience of the servant

decades prior to the publications of Edgeworth or Gaskell. Long regarded as one of the most psychologically complex novels of the eighteenth-century, the psychological complexity of *Caleb Williams* resides in the titular protagonist, defies literary convention, and disputes the interrelated literary and cultural stereotype of the servant or lower-class worker. Godwin makes this clear through just one of his many parallels with variation for Caleb is unlike his foil and fellow servant of the Falkland household, Mr. Collins. Collins adheres to the stereotype of the unquestioning and devoted domestic. It is my task to explore how the similarities and differences between Mr. Collins and Caleb confronts stereotypes about servants and the lower-orders of society to inspire the popular reader to interrogate the disrespect to which he may be routinely subjected.

Cugoano and Cultural Domination

Cugoano holds slavery to be a violation of both human reason and humane sensibility which ought to be the governing bonds of human dignity across all civilizations. One of the absorbing features of *Thoughts and Sentiments* is how the author interrogates the ideals of sensibility and reason across the oppositional identity categories of African or European. He does not solely lay claim to African capacity to revalorize the oppressed group. Rather, his orientation on injustice empowers his argumentative strategy to decenter the debate on slavery away from misrepresented African capacity and to powerfully re-center the debate on slavery on the inhumane, insensible, and unreasonable behavior of Europeans and their "fashionable way of getting riches." In so

doing, he displays the hypocrisy of European claims to moral superiority in contrast to their "brutish, base, but fashionable way of traffic[ing]" men, women, and children: "the slave-holders are meaner and baser than the African slaves, for while they subject and reduce them to a degree with brutes, they seduce themselves to a degree with devils" (22). As an abolitionist treatise, the priority of *Thoughts and Sentiments* is to formally, comprehensively, and systematically denounce slavery, the slave trade, and those European devils. Primarily, *Thoughts and Sentiments* dissects proslavery rhetoric. But, Cugoano includes his own personal narrative of capture and bears witness to experiences of violence that he and his fellow Africans routinely suffer. He thus makes strategic use of narrative, a narrative of misery and brutality, to consistently center his rejection of slavery on an act of human suffering inflicted by the "hands of barbarous" British subjects in collusion with their European neighbors (16). Unlike his white abolitionist contemporaries, Cugoano's African identity empowers his speech as an agent for his own case and for "the similar cases of thousands, which suffer by this infernal traffic" and who "cry for justice" and who have been "long crying for vengeance" (15, 21, 90).

For Cugoano, injustice as exclusion is one of direct brutality to persons as animals, a theme I pick up more in the next chapter, and a more insidious discursive one through pro-slavery, racist publications, which *Thoughts and Sentiments* seeks to debunk. According to Roxann Wheeler in her landmark book, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British*

Culture (2000), eighteenth-century Britons had multiple "paradigms to account for human difference, paradigms that could be mutually reinforcing or at odds" many of which did not "automatically" signify race as "skin color" as the word "race" does now (37, 2). She describes the various types of physical, social, and cultural differences used to signify inferiority in the eighteenth century. These include lack of agriculture, commerce, infrastructure, layered clothing, literary achievement, and Christianity. Proslavery discourse makes use of these multiple paradigms to support the forced bondage of Africans. The multiplicity and even contradictoriness of these paradigms does not mean they are less formidable; instead, any number or even a single paradigm could suffice to justify the slave economy.

Cugoano alludes to at least three major proslavery works that contain just the sort of multiple paradigms of racism which Wheeler describes, although the proslavery texts are oriented somewhat differently. The first of these is Edward Long's infamous three-volume *History of Jamaica* (1774). Long's essay focuses on describing the inferior character and cultural achievements of the African and arrives at a time before the growing momentum of the abolitionist movement. It is often considered the most influential and specifically racialist text of the later eighteenth century. Long begins his section on "Negroes" by asserting that Africans "differ most essentially from the Whites," then he offers a catalogue of contrasts between black and white physiologies. He cites the "black colour of their skins … which does not alter by transportation into other climates, and

which they never lose;" the "bestial fleece" of "wool" "instead of hair;" the "black colour of the lice which infest their bodies" which marks them as different "animals" than "the white lice" typical of the European; and "Their bestial or fetid smell, which they all have in a greater or less degree" (3-5). Next, Long denigrates Africans by compounding mental and cultural inadequacies. He addresses the "disparity" of their "faculties of the mind," which renders the African "incapable of making any progress in civility of science" and manifests itself in "Their barbarity to their children [which] debases their nature even below that of brutes" (5-8). He soon describes the lack of invention in the form of roads, architecture, and agriculture on the entire African continent. For Long, the African is "deceitful, thievish … incestuous, savage," and cannibalistic. He uniformly rejects the African from the same human species as the European (8). The "Negroe race," according to Long, more appropriately relates to the "oran-outang" than to "white men" (10). Long consistently figures a supposed African trait in subhuman terms; he figures black Africans as essentially different than white Europeans using dehumanizing and specific animal comparisons, like lice or the orangutan, and more general subhuman terminology, like barbaric, beastly or brutish.

The take the second two proslavery works to which Cugoano alludes in tandem, since these works defend slavery and the slave trade in direct response to antislavery publications: James Tobin's *Cursory Remarks upon the Reverend Mr. Ramsay's Essay…"* (1785) and Gordon Turnbull's *An Apology for Negro Slavery or*

the West-India Planters Vindicated from the Charges of Inhumanity, 2nd Edition (1786). Peter J. Kitson notes that the organized abolitionist movement becomes official in 1787 with the formation of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, but Christopher Leslie Brown's book, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (2006), demonstrates how antislavery sentiment had already been gaining momentum and cultural respect for at least two decades prior to the establishment of the formal abolitionist organization. Turnbull first defends slavery by historical, global, and Biblical precedent: "Slavery has existed in all ages, and at this moment exists in three quarters of the globe," and it is "permitted, perhaps, like other unequal and contracted ranks in society … by the omnipotent Creator." He then rejects antislavery arguments of human equality, turning to climate theory as a causal basis for human difference, referring to "the depravity, or cowardice of the people *of hot climates*" (7-8). Africans are not constituted for liberty. Next, he defends slavery as a humane practice. Before European trade-encounters with Africans, they were "immersed in the grossest ignorance, idolatry, and barbarism;" they even "sacrificed [wives and children] to the monstrous objects of their worship" (10). Therefore, the slave trade is compatible with "justice and humanity" because it "saves" already enslaved prisoners of war from "horrid deaths" by "'hacking, piercing, [and] tormenting,'" as Turnbull quotes from Captain Willem Bosman's "On the Slave Trade in Guinea" (1721). Turnbull goes on to describe the more humane treatment European slaveowners provide for Africans, which begins upon

arrival in the colonies with "fresh provisions [of] fruit and vegetables of all kinds;" leisure time to happily consort and "dance" with their "dear relations" and "many natives of their own country" and in their native "language" (21-22). Planters clothe, feed, and "comfortably lodge" all "negroes," who are not even asked to work until a year after arrival, by which time many have "married … and have houses, gardens, hogs, and poultry of their own" in a condition that the slaves themselves find superior to their former lives in Africa (24-26). Turnbull paints a portrait of Christian benevolence.

Tobin, meanwhile, offers a rather lengthy character defamation followed by a point-by-point response of Reverend James Ramsay's antislavery tract, *An Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* (1784). Tobin primarily defends slavery according to its national legality and thorough colonial regulation. He refers to colonial laws that govern the humane treatment of slaves by ordering clothing allowances, land allotments proportionate to the numbers and needs of slaves, provisions provided for criminal slaves in custody, maternity "respite" from work for female slaves, religious tutelage to convert slaves to Christianity, the observance of Christian days of rest on Sundays and Holy days, the "liberty" of slaves to plant and sell their own crops and meats independent from of the larger plantation economy, the enforcement of penalties for "maimed, or mutilated" slaves, and the capital punishment law for "persons killing slaves, wantonly, or inhumanly…for the *second* offence" (25-27). He thus defends the practice by citing British humanity

toward slaves which is governed as a matter of law, and which contrasts the French. Tobin goes on to indict the abolitionists as inhumane and unreasonable. Immediate abolition would be economically impossible and negligently inhumane because it would set "loose" hundreds of thousands of slaves who are otherwise cared for and who would be either unable or unwilling to "earn an *honest*" living (147).

Slavery, as Cugoano perceives, is predicated on a capacious version of moral exclusion—defining the Black African as inferior by numerous arguments and constructing the European trader and planter as morally superior. That superiority comes in the claims of humane and Christian stewardship of the European for the saved Africans. But it takes a specifically British mien when Turnbull and Tobin also claim that British slavery is much milder than the slave practices of other nations. Because justifications for slavery take on so many forms, Cugoano's writing against the injustice of slavery is not solely focused on the racialist defenses; he addresses cultural misrepresentation and racial misrepresentation. Here, he sums up the culturally-based fabrications of Long and Turnbull: "Some pretend that the Africans, in general, are a set of ignorant, dispersed, unsociable people; and they think it no crime to sell one another, and even their own wives and children; therefore they [slave-holders] bring them away to a situation where many of them may arrive to a better state than ever they should obtain in their own native country." This passage mimics proslavery rhetoric, which positions the African in opposition to the supposed

values of familial love, liberty, and civil society of Enlightened Europe. But Cugoano argues that Africans have "hierarchal systems of government that proves they are not merely savages and barbarians but have reached a state of civility." Legal codes of justice "are 'absolutely maintained by their free subjects;'" and Africans are born with an innate sense of nation, "'freedom and liberty'" which is "'as great … as the sons and daughters of fair Britain'" (Jeffrey Gunn 643). By establishing the African's sense of nation, liberty, and property, Cugoano examines slavery as a violation of human rights. Enlightenment and Christian principles are interchangeable moral codes, slavery is a violation of both, and European violations of their own cultural values mark them as hypocrites. Also of importance here, is Cugoano's positive comparison of the shared values of social cohesion, order, individual agency, and national autonomy. Whereas proslavery rhetoric figures inferiority through essential difference, Cugoano appeals to the British reader by asserting the essential similarity between African and British ideals and social structures.

Next, Cugoano targets the nationalistic excuse for slavery—that other countries were engaged in the traffic and they treated Africans far worse. For one, Cugoano addresses the claim that Africans themselves engage in slavery, a claim that preys on the public's ignorance about the sheer vastness and variety of the African continent and its peoples in contrast to England's geographical insularity and relative homogeny. Cugoano reminds the reader of the "vast…extent" that is Africa, concedes that some "bad practices" may exist

among its "numerous inhabitants," but those practices can only be limited to the specific "boundaries," "kingdoms and principalities" of the many "divided" "nations," "very few" of which practice any form of legalized, government-sanctioned slavery, and none practicing any form of slavery so abject as the chattel slavery of European invention (25-26). His emphasis on various territories and social hierarchies debunks the proslavery view of Africa as an unwritten landscape that existed in a pre-civilized state without recognizable national geographies or sovereignties before European intervention. Cugoano then applies a comparative analogy of a random act of murder to whittle down this whopping national pretense to its basic, perverse, and astonishingly childish reasoning—that others were doing it first. Malicious homicide motivated by degenerate pleasure could have no just excuse when transpiring between the murderous actor and his victim; likewise, no national gain can morally justify the perverted rationale undergirding international genocide. The behavior of the European who engages in the calculated violence of modern chattel slavery makes him a criminal; those who try to validate the system through "specious" reasoning are lunatics (22). All participants need to be held accountable: unpremeditated murder deserves the madhouse; calculated genocide demands retribution.

Thoughts and Sentiments likewise addresses the legal argument for slavery made by Tobin, in which Tobin claims abolition would violate the property rights of slave owners, undermine the British economy, and inhumanely

abandon the hitherto nurtured slaves. Cugoano reflects upon this fraudulent claim to injury that ignores the thousands of African victims with indignant disapprobation, echoing several key phrases and passages of Tobin in order to re-right and re-write moral order. For example, Tobin compares Ramsay's proposals to hold slaveholders accountable as criminals for their cruel treatment of slaves to the popular print, "*The World Turned Upside Down*." For Tobin, slavery as an institution and its forms of corporal discipline of slaves are within legal right, and prosecution for legally protected behavior would be a bizarre overturning of justice. Just as Tobin calls Ramsay's arguments "virulent" character "invectives," so Cugoano calls Tobin's use of the image of the foolishly inverted world "a ludicrous invective comparison" because human law can only be folly when it protects "robbers, thieves and vagabonds" instead of the innocent (19).

Cugoano's use of the word "virulent" also comes in the phrase "virulent craftsmen" (18-19), which opens an extended Biblical metaphor that associates Tobin and other defenders of slavery to Demetrius, Biblical "silversmith" of idolatrous shrines. Slavers idolatrize money and profit at the expense of social order and Christian morality through the joint circulation of human cargo and circulation of misrepresenting literature. It is they, not Ramsay, who take advantage of a misinformed public. Just as the silversmiths in the passage from Acts refuse to surrender their economy in idolatry, so do slaveholders and their defenders refuse to relinquish evil to restore moral right. Cugoano seems to be

playing on the word "acts" here, since he references a passage from Acts and defines ethical character by "acts;" evildoers and evil-speakers cannot be good men or proper moral guides for a single slave let alone an entire nation.

The major fallacy of Tobin's argument, from Cugoano's view, is a false distinction between internal character and outward behavior. Tobin defends "the characters of so valuable, respectable, and useful set of men," as he describes the "British West India planters," even as he does not wish "to be ranked among the advocates for slavery" like them. Tobin falsely believes that the planters can be considered honorable men even if their practice of enslaving others ought not be condoned. Tobin further claims to side with Ramsay in hope for "the blessings of freedom" for slaves someday, but takes issue with Ramsay's supposed misuse of "the sacred lines of religion," manipulation of the "prejudices of the misinformed multitude," and seeming hypocrisy against the very same planters who he counted among his "social intimates" when living as a neighbor among them "within the tropics." Tobin castigates Ramsay for being a hypocritical neighbor to the same West Indian planters who he once called friends. Tobin's concentration on the neighborliness of fellow British subjects, however, erases from view the very individuals most at risk in the debate on slavery—the African slaves themselves. When Cugoano writes, "who distress their neighbours by their thrift, robbery, and plunder," he refers to the African peoples debased by slaveholders, who are violated by the real hypocrisy of "wicked" acts inflicted against them by their neighboring Christians who

desecrate the fundamental golden rule of neighborly compassion (19). Even if Tobin may not be a trader or owner of slaves, his public defense of those practices and misrepresentation of the reality of plantation slavery of is no less malicious for contributing to an immoral climate just as dangerous as slavery itself. Cugoano turns the tables on Tobin's argument to show that traders in human cargo, slaveowners, and their defenders are uniformly, criminally guilty since their collective contribution to the nation is the idolatry of money over reformation, placing Britain on a morally destructive path.

It is this theme of moral destruction and method of Biblical analysis, both fitting for the jeremiad genre, that intersects closely with Cugoano's method of deconstructing racist rhetoric. This extended deconstruction of racial rhetoric first appears in his own personal narrative of capture to describe the lost innocence of an idyllic childhood vastly different than the bleak portrait of Africa described by Long. Cugoano is still a child in a state of "innocence," "enjoying peace and tranquility," venturing "into the woods to gather fruit and catch birds, and such amusements as pleased" he and his "play-fellows" when "several great ruffians" unexpectedly close in upon the children. It is in fact emotional manipulation that initially subdues the youngsters when the abductors, preying on the African child's implicit ignorance of dishonesty, accuse the children of committing "a fault against [the kidnappers'] lord" for which the boys "must answer." It is not until the boys try to flee that the "enslaving men" restrain them at knifepoint and gunpoint: "Some of us attempted in vain to run away, but

pistols and cutlasses were soon introduced, threatening, that if we offered to stir we should all lie dead on the spot." So, ensues Cugoano's fall from a state of innocence into a state of misery, swiftly exposed to the multifarious forms of violence of the slave trade. He suffers physical violence in the form of kidnapping and restraint, psychological violence through the death-threat of "pistols and cutlasses," moral violence as an object of deception and "treachery," emotional violence through false accusation and "fear," and spiritual violence in his lost innocence (19, 12-15). His first encounter with deceit and violence of any kind is at the hands of European kidnappers, his supposed Christian saviors who steal him from his family, from his childhood liberty and safety while "playing in a field" along "with about eighteen or twenty more boys and girls" (12).

Cugoano works through ironic contrast and reversal. *Thoughts and Sentiments* inaugurates its reader with the immediate and sustained contrast between those many moral claims of the apologist for slavery against descriptions of horror. Even as Cugoano alludes to and quotes specific proslavery texts and passages, he unremittingly contrasts those claims to his lived reality, those postures of moral superiority to the actual behavior he has witnessed and suffered, as have thousands and "millions" (86). In so doing, he reverses accusations of inferiority to decenter debates about African character; instead, he forces the English and the European apologist for slavery to defend his own tangible behavior rather than conjectural African character. For example, Cugoano's personal narrative juxtaposes European "wickedness" to

African innocence, tangible conduct versus moral-spiritual ontology. He calls into question the very basis for defining supremacy in terms of skin color or culture, asking if this is the behavior of the racially or culturally superior, then who would ever aspire to it? Or as Cugoano exclaims, "their aspirations are insidious and false … And if such men can boast of greater degrees of knowledge, than an African is entitled to, I shall let them enjoy all the advantages of it unenvied, as I fear it consists of a greater degree of infidelity, and that of a blacker kind than only skin deep." Cugoano strategically places his personal narrative against the proslavery posture of "saving" the African. Africans are not saved, they are stolen; Europeans are not saviors, they are thieves (11).

Just as proslavery rhetoric works in an aggregate manner, concurrently denigrating culture and race, so does the rhetoric of *Thoughts and Sentiments* to debunk it. Advocates for slavery use Biblical stories to figure black skin as a mark of innate immorality. Slavery apologists read black skin as the mark of Cain or claim that Africans are the Canaanites, the cursed descendants of Ham. Cugoano directly confronts racist misappropriations of scripture by offering his own Biblical readings that neutralize black skin as a negative signifier. He does so by showing alternative symbolic meaning of skin tone and by reversing the symbolic trope of blackness back onto the slave trafficker. Sometimes this works through simple reversal of animalistic language; Jeffrey Gunn points to some of these phrases: "'white devils'" "'beasts of the night,'" "'prowling for their prey,'"

"'impious dogs,'" and "'dens of thieves'" ("Creating a Paradox," 642). Most times, Cugoano extends his contrast between behavior, began in his personal narrative, and racist arguments that read physiognomic blackness as a sign for internal evil: "A good man will neither speak nor do as a bad man will; but if a man is bad, it makes no difference whether he be a black or a white devil" (12). Here he begins to dismantle the association between skin color and moral worth. He writes that it does not matter whether he was kidnapped by "black or white" men, since, again, it is the evil of the abduction that reflects character (12). Some pages later, he asserts, "their external complexion, whether black or white, should be no excuse for them to do evil" (19). If Wheeler claims that skin color was a less consolidated notion of race, then Cugoano's frequent treatment of skin color and motifs of blackness or whiteness suggests otherwise.

By and large, Cugoano transforms color into one of spiritually symbolic but earthly benign significance. He asserts that only the Divine can understand internal moral worth since human variety derives in God and is wholly outside man's power: "And God alone who established the course of nature, can bring about and establish what variety he pleases; and it is not in the power of man to make one hair white or black" (29). Indeed, God, in his wisdom, generated the variety of skin color as spiritual guide, "intended to point out and shew to the white man, that there is a sinful blackness in his own nature, which he can no more change, than the external blackness which he sees in another can be rendered otherwise; and it likewise holds out to the black man." When man

comes to face judgment at the end of his earthly existence, the outer shell of the flesh, or his "black or a white coat," will be discarded, and all that will remain is his behavior (40-41). Cugoano likewise rejects Long's polygenesis thesis in favor of a Biblically coherent monogenesis:

> God who made the world, hath made of one blood all the nations of men that dwell on all the face of the earth. Wherefore we may justly infer, as there are no inferior species, but all one blood and of one nature, that there does not an inferiority subsist, or depend, on their colour, features of form, whereby some men make a pretense to enslave others. 29

Any differences in features or skin tone only incidentally reflect the natural variations resulting from "different climates" which also logically bespeak of God's wisdom in adapting human bodies to best suit the requirements of their environments. According to Cugoano, the divine hand in creation implicitly and incontestably means that no aspect of human variety can be evil in and of itself. God's hand in creation designs all the variety of nature to be "equally innocent" (40).

In two beautifully rendered passages, Cugoano extends the motif of blackness from one of neutral symbolic significance, to a motif of innocence and equality, and then to a motif of wholeness, loveliness, and beauty like the rainbow:

> the external blackness of the Ethiopians, is as innocent and natural, as spots in the leopards; and that the difference of colour and complexion,

> which it hath pleased God to appoint among men, are no more unbecoming unto either of them, than the different shades of the rainbow are unseemly to the whole, or unbecoming to any part of that apparent arch. 40-41

This passage works in tandem with an earlier allusion to a passage from the Book of Jeremiah regarding how "the Ethiopian can [neither] change his skin" nor "the leopard his spots," which Cugoano interprets to mean that if God appointed black skin color to signify anything, it was as a form of divine but merely symbolic "instruction intended … to shew … that none among the fallen and apostate race of men, can by any effort of their own, change their nature from the blackness and guilt of the sable dye of sin and pollution" (39). Cugoano builds ironic contrast between blackness of skin and blackness of soul. He thus refigures the color black back into the realm of the symbolic, inverting and disrupting the tropes of racial difference that had been projected onto the figures and forms of people of color. Cugoano extends his point when he writes that "all men are like Ethiopians (even God's elect) in a state of nature and unregeneracy, they are black with original sin, and spotted with actual transgression, which they cannot reverse" except, that is, "through the blood of Jesus" (40). Man cannot be the savior of man; "God alone" brings "life and salvation, with light and gladness to men" (40). Instead of trying to elevate the Ethiopian in the eyes of the oppressor, Cugoano ironically discovers human equality by occupying

God's omniscient view of man; from this view, all men are sinners, therefore all men are equal.

The treatment of the trope of black sin and black skin is contextually ironic and radical in several ways. Most obviously, Cugoano's performance of logical reasoning from a Christian perspective flies in the face of the racialist discourse that had fabricated the unintelligence, illogic, and heathenism of the black man. Cugoano uses his mode of reversal as just the first step toward showing how behavior is the true mark of sin and barbarity. Tropes for slavery operate in two directions. In one direction, advocates for slavery construct tropes of African inferiority. Simultaneously, Europeans contend that their superiority places them in the position to civilize the African through a gentle form of governance. Turnbull claims that West-Indian "servitude, or slavery, as it is called, is of the very mildest kind" for the Negroes who "are not at all fitted to fill the superior stations, or more elevated ranks in civil society" (34-35). His colonial pastoral fantasy draws on the language of sensibility in his illustration of the new West-Indian slave's "cheerful" reunion with "near and dear relations," who dance, sing, and gratefully praise "the white men [who] are very good." In an almost sexualized image, Turnbull claims that the slave auction, or "day of sale," is not an act of objectification but a welcome opportunity for the African to show off his physical assets: the slaves "not only meet the planter's looks [. . .] but they try, by offering their stout limbs to his inspection, jumping to shew their activity, and other allurements, to induce those, whose appearance pleases them, to buy them,

and to engage, if possible, a preference in their favour" (22-23). This passage goes so far as to suggest that the slave seduces the master! Turnbull's sentimental, erotic, and pastoral imagery and his air of Christian superiority participate in a long tradition of colonial imagery that propagandized the New World as a New Eden. Wrapped up in this colonial fantasy are multiple delusions of Christian benevolence. The English saw redemptive possibilities for themselves, fashioned themselves as the planters of faith among Native Americans and Africans, and they erected these fictions to disconnect their colonial acts of violence from supposedly more brutal Spanish conquistadors, or the Black Legend.

Cugoano challenges these fantasies and postures of superiority by describing his forced diaspora from Africa. To his deep personal "shame," Cugoano admits that some of kidnappers were "of [his] own complexion" (16). His mortification for the actions of his countrymen places guilt upon black and white slave traffickers alike. This stance is rhetorically consistent with his argument about racial equality because he makes no moral exceptions for either black or white accomplices in slavery. Although his mortification is genuine, Cugoano is also disrupting the racist binary between white/black, European/African by his rational and morally conscience stance. His rationality and conscience strategically forces the English reader into an ethical bind. The reader cannot maintain both African inferiority and his own superiority at the same time. If the African is morally inferior for his participation in slavery, then

so is the European. If the European is morally superior, then partaking in the supposed cultural practices of an inferior people is inexcusable and degrading, thus degenerating his supposed superiority. In assuming a degree of moral culpability, then, Cugoano highlights the sham of Christian justifications for slave trafficking. Cugoano's work here is not merely a reversal of racialist rhetoric because he is not preoccupied with simply shifting the status of white over black to black over white. His work becomes deconstruction because he steps entirely outside the white-skin/black-skin dichotomy characteristic of racial-supremacist thinking by showing how behavior determines "brutishness," not skin color; it is the European who lacks "probity," or moral integrity and honesty, because of his multitudinous, "wicked" acts of violence (10).

He has already described his childhood abduction, but he goes on to detail "the horrors" of the Middle Passage; the shame of the slave auction; and the nightmarish reality of plantation life rife with unremitting starvation, rampant sickness, familial separation, frequent sexual abuse, and "the most horrible … beatings and lashings" (15-16). Slaves are not allotted land or animals, but they are treated like animals by "The bold and offensive enslavers of men, who subject their fellow-creatures to the rank of a brute, and the immolate value of a beast" (83). Of the slave auction, he writes, "Here daughters are clinging to their mothers, and mothers to their daughters, bedewing each others naked breasts with tears; here fathers, mothers, and children, locked in each others arms, are begging never to be separated." No dance, no music, no food, no joy—but there

is "pleading," "praying," "entreating," "weeping," and "bemoaning," to unyielding and "unfeeling masters" (74). Cugoano draws on the same language of sensibility as Turnbull to paint a very different description of the African experience, full of many emotions, none of them pleasant, and all of them set against the backdrop of the uncompassionate actions of the European; behavior reveals "the darkest shades of nature" (40). Lauren Henry, speaking of Phillis Wheatley, James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, Ignatius Sancho, Olaudah Equiano, and Cugoano, proclaims, "In their poetry, narratives, letters, and essays, these individuals asked that the English reading public recognize them as living, thinking, and writing human beings" (68). Henry recalls Henry Louis Gates Jr's assertion that eighteenth-century Britain saw writing as the most "'visible sign of reason'" and "'genius'" (68). The Afro-British authors felt it a moral imperative to use their literacy and artistry to deny "allegations … 'of the childlike nature of slaves'" through displays of individual genius (68). Cugoano's act of writing acts as protest by displaying all those characteristics denied by racist rhetoric, but it also displays a humanity and dignity of restraint, since he, unlike the slavers, chooses to engage in a public debate on slavery rather than their direct acts of violence.

Wollstonecraft and Nonrecognition

Wollstonecraft eschews questions of essentialism. Readers unfamiliar with *Rights of Woman* might be surprised to discover how little space Wollstonecraft allots to describing the essential nature of woman or in point-by-

point rebuffing specific misogynistic views. Indeed, this seemingly missing content and seeming acquiescence was what an earlier generation of academic feminists bemoaned of the text some decades ago. The noticeable absence of sustained definition of woman's essential nature or in denying woman's inferior social state is deliberate. It is deliberate because, for this writer, gender is a social construction rather than an innate identity. She perceives the sexist reliance on claims about the inferior nature of woman as a contrivance by which to enforce the sexual hierarchy; and it is the sexual hierarchy that manufactures and naturalizes gender difference. Wollstonecraft poses many queries about female identity, but she poses these questions in surprising ways. For example, the author does not ask, "what is woman?" Rather, she implicitly asks, "What is it like to be a woman?" In other words, how does a female's daily experience reflect her assigned social position and her restricted functions within it? Wollstonecraft does not wonder, "Are women inferior to men?" Of course, they are! "But how did they become this way and why?" she interrogates. Her mode of interrogation establishes a new conversation about women that steps outside the "epithets of weakness," what-is-woman question (73). Instead, she aims to uncover the hidden agenda underlying essentialist arguments to expose the injurious consequences for dehumanized women, desensitized men, and the entire moral state of society. But Wollstonecraft does not simply describe these problems as ambiguous outcry; she has a comprehensive social justice agenda in

which she defines human dignity, if only to show how social constructions blockade woman from achieving that dignity.

But first, Wollstonecraft presents her own identity as exemplary of a woman the moral and civil conscience to which women can aspire; she also highlights her social position as an educator with critical insight based on direct experience. In contrast to the writing persona chosen for *A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (1790), in which the reading public assumed male authorship, Wollstonecraft quite self-consciously, conspicuously, and immediately draws upon her identity as a woman and professional experience as an educator in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. She writes in the first-person throughout the text, calls women her "fellow-creatures," and points to her intentions for advocacy when she writes, "I plead for my sex—not for myself" (71). She evokes her professional educational experience, her reading-research, and her rational observations when she writes, "I have turned over various books written on the subject of education, and patiently observed the conduct of parents and the management of schools" (71). Her immediate identification of herself as female means that she writes from the social position of a woman hampered by cultural prejudices, but she also points to her social positon as an educator to emphasize her professional expertise. Her experiences as a woman and expertise as a teacher causes Wollstonecraft to lament the appalling condition of women as a symptom of many cultural and socioeconomic factors: "the neglected education of my fellow-creatures is the grand source of the misery I deplore; and that

women, in particular, are rendered weak and wretched by a variety of concurring causes" (71). Woman's entire social milieu at every phase of life produces physical, mental, and moral disadvantages. The author already locates woman's disadvantages as rooted in false preconceptions about the nature of woman that have justified the cultural practices and socialization processes that manufacture "woman."

Wollstonecraft announces her intention to advocate reform to the processes affecting the development of her target audience of middle-class women, and she draws upon aspects of her own identity to appeal to that readership. The first of these is her own authority as female professional. In Susan Skedd's chapter "Women Teachers and the Expansion of Girls' Schooling in England c. 1760-1820," she describes the new "commercial" "girls' schools" as one of the great "innovations" of the eighteenth century that gave unprecedented numbers of primarily middle-class girls access to "public" education rather than the strictly "private" instruction of governesses hitherto afforded by families of greater social rank. Skedd connects the rise of "public education" for girls with the related rise in teaching as a female profession: "Not only did the commercial schools provide a public education for girls, they also brought a new source of employment to women, in a profession that was far from private in character. Teaching was a common occupation for women in Hanoverian England and running a school offered them a chance to manage their own businesses and the prospect of independence" (101-102). The author's work as governess to a

wealthy family and schoolmistress of her own school was within a growing professional sphere tolerated for single and married women of middling class. However, Wollstonecraft's many biographers alongside Skedd have comprehensively considered the author's troubled outlook regarding her miserable time as governess and precarious self-employment as headmistress of her own public school in Beverley, a venture that eventually "failed to find enough pupils to make the school viable" (111). While a growing line of work, teaching was nevertheless financially risky and far more uncommon in the 1790s than it was by the 1810s, as Skedd's data reveals (105). Professional teaching was still a nascent career for women and one that offered Wollstonecraft some distinction.

The author emphasizes her professional qualifications, perhaps exaggerates her pedagogical research, and especially highlights her methodical investigations on the effects of parental and instructorial interactions with children. Having been both governess to the wealthy and instructor to middle class students, Wollstonecraft did indeed witness the socialization of children across social ranks; as a woman, she has indisputable insight regarding the daily tasks, routines, and habits of women at all stages of life. Access to the "minutiae" of feminine existence would have fallen outside the realm of expertise for the male author due to the formalities of decorum during this period (162). I assert that she is yoking her feminine identity and professional skills to transform her otherwise oppressed social position into one steeped with

special insight. Foremost, her emphasis on reading, observing, and reflecting appeals to an eighteenth-century model of cognitive development, as seen in my reading of Smith, in which a constant back-and-forth interaction between the social environment and internal reflection is the hallmark of human consciousness that can lead to an empathic, humane rational conscience. Wollstonecraft thus already suggests how woman's characteristically weak sense of internal identity and related ineptitude in rational operations can be altered to strengthen the female character. Wollstonecraft's entreaty on behalf of her sex reinforces my interpretation here. In Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, human rationality has a social purpose. He couples the cultivation of a strong internal sense-of-self with a strong sense of empathy for humanity. In this manner, self-interest and social-improvement counterbalance each other for the benefit of the individual and society. When Wollstonecraft writes, "I plead for my sex—not for myself," she presents her feminine, professional, reformist, and authorial identity as morally and empathically motivated by "the love of mankind" and "the moral and civil interest of mankind" (71, 66). She constructs a morally conscience writing persona to demonstrate to her audiences the moral capacity of woman and to suggest, by example, how the improvement of woman could contribute to the overall improvement of society.

Unfortunately, women's lives and identities are determined by the male authorities that surround them; and misogyny is the undeniable, "prevailing prejudice" of those male authorities that govern females: "women are not

allowed to have sufficient strength of mind to acquire what really deserves the name of virtue," namely "rationality" (108, 84, 102). Eighteenth-century, British culture, built on one key hierarchy of male over female, assumes female inferiority of bodily strength as an outward symbol of her inferior mind. It subsequently raises girls into women in ways exactly counter to the development of her reason and internal self-worth whilst also disesteeming her social roles. For Wollstonecraft, the cultivation of internal identity, moral character, and social agency is nearly impossible since women are unacknowledged as fully human in the first place. The nonrecognition of woman's full humanity first comes from inherited cultural prejudice, then socialization and acculturation processes habitually and persistently defraud woman from any chance "to cultivate her dormant faculties," which are those very same faculties of reason, imagination, empathy, and modesty, that could prove misogynistic notions about women to be false (93).

Wollstonecraft primarily assesses woman's character as an externally assigned social position in contrast to the "specious reasoners" below who mystifyingly demand whilst hypocritically loathing woman's supposedly, naturally "submissive demeanor of dependence" (99). Even in literature professing interest in "the education of women," women "are still reckoned a frivolous sex, and ridiculed or pitied by the writers who endeavour by satire or instruction to improve them" (74). Wollstonecraft implicates diverse, authoritative, and prominent texts for the perpetuation of misogynistic views of

women as "weak," "capricious," "frivolous," "rak[ish]," and "deceitful" (80, 113, 129, 193, 97). Some of these texts include John Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), John Dryden's *The State of Innocence: and Fall of Man* (1677), Alexander Pope's *Of the Characters of Women: An Epistle to a Lady* (1735), Samuel Richardson's *Clarissa, or, the History of a Young Lady* (1748), Dr. John Gregory's *A Father's Legacy to His Daughters* (1761), Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile, or On Education* (1762), and James Fordyce's *Sermons to Young Women* (1766). Wollstonecraft reads in each of these authors an inherited sexual prejudice:

> Probably the prevailing opinion, that woman was created for man, may have taken its rise from Moses's poetical story . . . or, only be so far admitted as it proves that man, from the remotest antiquity, found it convenient to exert his strength to subjugate his companion, and his invention to shew that she ought to have her neck bent under the yoke, because the whole creation was only created for his convenience or pleasure. 92

Wollstonecraft sardonically articulates the sexual double standard pervasive in her culture built on the biased, perhaps wholly fabricated, belief that God mandated woman to be the subservient comfort of man. The author's words, "convenience or pleasure," reveal a perceptible disgust aimed at the corrupt sexual motives behind man's scriptural interpretation. Ironically, considering their claim to "the greater portion" of reason, men have in fact relied on brute physical strength to reduce woman to a social status more akin to the animal

than fellow human and "helpmate" (83, 162). They have wielded writing of diverse genres for the same purpose.

Routine physical and cultural acts of violence have supported masculine sexual prerogative for centuries. Writing may be less obviously violent, but its influence on culture carries direct consequences for women. The nonrecognition of women, for instance, manifests itself when women are everywhere "ridiculed" and "mocked" as "the objects of pity" and "the objects of contempt (74, 102, 73). Wollstonecraft implicates these texts for levelling "sarcasms" at women's capacities, characters, and achievements (193). She finds the mocking of female achievement particularly disturbing since women have been denigrated for pursuing and attaining the only forms of knowledge made available to them. Constant ridicule under the veneer of advice sinisterly demoralizes women's impetuses to improve themselves. Cultural prejudice underscored by literary texts from poetry to sermons to educational treatises mutually reinforce one another and subsequently inform how girls are raised, thus abetting the normalization of daily acts of disrespect and abuse toward women.

Such misguided cultural representations encourage the continued degradation of women by discouraging social reforms necessary to counteract the disadvantages against which many women struggle. Most fundamentally, the writers above perpetuate preconceived prejudices that relegate women to social functions little better than other "domestic brutes," "principally created for the use of man" (84, 102). To that aim, such texts recommend women to be

"pleasing at the expence of every solid virtue" (87). Misogyny thus infiltrates every social setting, every relationship, and deliberately damages the development of females from their earliest years to make women docile, pleasing creatures. Fathers rule homes like tyrants: "the weak king to the weak father of a family; they are all eager to crush reason; yet always assert that they usurp its throne only to be useful" (67). Within the intimacy of the home and by exploiting the natural dependency of the child, fathers demand the unquestioning obedience of wives, children, and servants but always demand more restraint and compliance from daughters: "The child is not left a moment to its own direction, particularly a girl, and thus rendered dependent— dependence is called natural" (109). The education of girls incites their fear and demands their constant restraint to condition her obeisance; these adapted, learned behaviors only appear "natural" since the habituation process begins at such an early age.

For example, parents force the girl "to sit still for hours" to suppress her natural inclination for "exercise;" parents guide the girl to quietly pursue vain entertainments, like "dressing" and "dolls," instead of independently exploring the outdoors or voicing her curiosities about the world. Independent rambles and encouraged curiosity would activate her faculty of reason and "unfold her imagination" (109). But girls are forbidden to exercise their minds and their bodies. The distinct dissimilarities between girls' and boys' upbringings exposes to Wollstonecraft the deliberately calculated processes by which women are

weakened and alienated from their otherwise innate capacities. For this author, the rearing of young women already coincides with Rousseau's advised educational model in *Emile*, in which he recommends parents, in the best interest of their daughters, prepare girls for their subservient social role by forbidding "liberty," demanding her "'habitual restraint,'" and instilling her "'fears'" (156). By suppressing both her physical and mental strengths and producing constant apprehension, the socialization process produces female "docility, which fear stamps on the behaviour" (156). Fear also manufactures fragility: "Fragile in every sense of the word, [women] are obliged to look up to man for every comfort" (132). Wollstonecraft writes, "These fears … shew a degree of imbecility which degrades a rational creature in a way women are not aware of" (132). Parents and educators inculcate a girls' mistrust of herself, apprehension of the larger world around her, and outright terror of the male authority figures who will govern her from birth until death; all of this begins in "infancy," prior to the child's earliest inclinations toward independent, rational thought, and long before the girl can form any awareness of the violation imposed upon her (84).

Wollstonecraft articulates how the gender hierarchy translates into day-to-day circumstances for women. Fittingly for a treatise on education, the author focuses much of her attention on the education and upbringing of daughters. Virginia Sapiro reminds scholars of this text that "education" in this period carries the broader meaning of upbringing and socialization in addition to schooling (238). Indeed, Wollstonecraft adheres to Adam Smith's model of

cognitive development expressed in *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, which theorizes about education proper and the entire process of socialization from infancy to adulthood. No critic has acknowledged Mary Wollstonecraft's extended application of Adam Smith's *Theory*, but she engages Smith's descriptive theory in her contrasts between boys' and girls' upbringings throughout the text. Smith's work has been increasingly accepted as an early example of cognitive-psychological theory since he describes morality through the methods by which inherently social human animals come to measure the propriety of their own and others' actions within social contexts. When Wollstonecraft refers to the innate faculties of passion, reason, and imagination, for example, she applies specifically Smithian terminology for innate mental structures which help man organize his world and experiences in it. The two broad structures of the human mind in Smith's eighteenth-century phrasing are the passions and reason, terms already familiar to eighteenth-century readers.

However, Smith converts the passion-reason opposition into an interactive dialectic; passions are natural motives that function in dynamic, back-and-forth interplay with reason. Smith divides the passions into two main categories. First, the passions of the body include "hunger," sex, and the avoidance of "bodily pain;" second, the passions of the "imagination," which he further categorizes as either "unsocial passions" or "social passions." Unsocial passions include "hope," "fear," "grief," "anger," and "resentment" since they reflect the subject's internal concerns for himself. Social passions include "love,"

"Generosity, humanity, kindness, compassion, mutual friendship and esteem, all the social and benevolent affections" that moves man away from pure self-interest and toward a concern for his fellow man (Smith 56).

The different categories of passions are not in opposition; both are equally necessary and simply represent different sets of human motives (59). Smith writes of the self-preserving value of the unsocial passions: "These passions, however, are regarded as necessary parts of the character of human nature. A person becomes contemptible who tamely sits still and submits to insults, without attempting either to repel or to revenge them" (49). Thus, the "unsocial" passions spur an individual's self-preservation and become a "utility to the public" when applied to causes for "justice and the equality of its administration" (49). By contrast, Smith considers social passions to be the foundation of "mutual sympathy," or empathy, and love—emotions necessary for genuine human connection: "the chief part of human happiness arises from the consciousness of being loved" (62). Although no passion or "appetite" lacks "propriety," he nevertheless holds the social passions as the most sacred and socially stabilizing. For Smith, the innate desire for human connection and love motivates social formation and social cooperation.

What truly separates man from brute is man's higher-level cognitions of "judgment" and "self-command" that motivate man to develop a balance between his personal desires and his concern for others. Self-command is the first step toward moral conscience: individuals must be "well inured to the hard

discipline of self-command" to accustom themselves to the "restraint" required by society (146). Restraint initially displays as proper "Conduct," which is typically motivated by the unsocial passions of fear and self-preservation: "A very young child has no self-command; but, whatever are its emotions, whether fear, or grief, or anger, it endeavors always, by the violence of its outcries, to alarm, as much as it can, the attention of its nurse, or of its parents" (145). Only when caregivers "are … obliged to frighten it" does the child learn, out of a sense of "its own safety" to restrain "the passion which incites it" (145). For man to achieve human dignity, fear-driven compliance must transition into an internalized "sense of duty" motivated by the social passions, or the desire to win the approval, love, and sympathy of others:

> When it is old enough to go to school, or to mix with its equals, … It naturally wishes to gain their favour, and to avoid their hatred or contempt … and it soon finds that it can do so in no other way than by moderating, not only its anger, but all its other passions, to the degree which its play-fellows and companions are likely to be pleased with
>
> 145-146

The child first moderates his behavior out of the unsocial motive of fear and then later out of the social motive to win the approval and esteem of his peers. Smith describes here a shift in consciousness in which the subject's earliest motives are the unsocial passions of self-preservation which eventually give way to the more precious motives of the social passions through the expansion of the social

matrix and varied human interactions. Mere behavioral compliance, therefore, does not define human dignity. Dignity arises when the mature mind can negotiate between his personal desires, the dictates of society, and the relative, moral merit between those competing demands. Smith famously calls the achievement of this process the "impartial spectator."

Imagination, which Smith views as a form of reason, is the building block of the "impartial spectator." The impartial spectator is, again, a dialectical concept that measures the propriety of our own actions and the actions of other men. To judge others, the subject imagines himself "in like situation;" this is empathy. To judge oneself, the impartial spectator helps man push aside his immediate appetites to judge the propriety of those appetites from the imagined perspective of an outside observer: "We endeavor to examine our own conduct as we imagine any other fair and impartial spectator would examine it" (110). Smith's notion of the impartial spectator is a distinct, higher-level cognitive process by which we judge the appropriateness of "our own conduct" via an imagined, idealized self in observance with the most noble, "sacred rules" of society (138). The development of the impartial spectator and the mental ability to negotiate between "self-love" and the "sacred rules" of society defines human dignity. Human dignity is not tantamount to utter selflessness and self-sacrifice. Rather, human dignity rests in the cultivation of a moral conscience that can measure the merits of self-interest against cultural ethics. This capacity, in turn, allows the subject to choose which interest is most appropriately attended to and

by which most ethical course of action. Human dignity thus rests in the individual's moral choice. Sometimes his own self-preservation overrides social dictates; sometimes societal needs require a degree of self-sacrifice. In either case, the morally dignified person's actions stem from his internal ethics and reflection, not from instinctive fear or lack of options.

Wollstonecraft argues that Rousseau's educational advice for girls closely resembles how they are already raised. But with Smith's articulation of human dignity in mind, Rousseau's educational model is exactly the correct formula for supplanting the human dignity of women since it is founded on fear. Therefore, he is exactly wrong to subscribe to the worst views of woman as man's designated play-thing and, even worse, to disseminate the means by which to dehumanize her. His educational model obstructs the development of the female's faculties of reason, imagination, moral conscience, and human agency to enact her own ethical choices in the world. Thus, Wollstonecraft holds him up as both brilliant and depraved, as the quintessential example of male depravity ruling society rather than rationality. He is a "sensualist" and a "libertine," whose intellectual gifts and "talents" have been "bent by power to sinister purposes" (90, 74, 80). The root of his debauchery is as it is for most men, their absolute power over women.

"Absolute power," just like absolute oppression, "degrade the human character" by removing the necessity to reason. The interplay between the young person's desires and the moral limits imposed upon him by the social

environment stimulate the mental faculty of reason by compelling him to restrain his instinctive, self-centered passions to earn the approbation of his peers and loved ones. Absolute power removes from the human experience those moral limitations since the powerful are never told "no;" accustomed to having all their desires, whims, and caprices unquestionably fulfilled, no circumstance arises to spark the faculty of reason or its resulting empathy. Even as men negotiate professional relationships through the exercise of reason, men of all ranks also occupy a positon of unmitigated power over women of the same or lower rank. Like Rousseau, men who may otherwise display rationality and empathy when in the company of their peers and equals, suspend those faculties in their relationships with women. Thus, Rousseau represents the worst symptoms of the "unnatural" gender hierarchy that allows the "vice" of unrestrained (sexual) appetite to "reign" which, in turn, occludes the possibility of genuine love, empathy, and friendship between the sexes (94).

By contrast, woman's upbringing is one of a different extreme—absolute tyranny. She is forbidden exercise, confined from the world, and disallowed curiosity or inquiry. Whereas the young man must, at least semi-independently, negotiate peer, parental, and professional relationships in his wider world of daily experience, the young woman is constantly kept indoors, in sight, and "governed by fear" (91). Continual surveillance coupled with constant fear obstruct the spark of reason in females since they are given no opportunity for self-reliance or internal reflection. Both unlimited indulgence and complete

constraint extinguish the rational faculty because the child never has occasion to learn self-command. The unrestrained tyrant functions at the animal level by succumbing to all "his sensual appetites" of the unsocial passions. Meanwhile, the woman subjugated by fear lives in that perpetual "childish" state of "mind," in which she restrains her conduct for reasons of self-preservation but rarely through a genuine moral conscience or as a "moral agent" (211, 104). Young women are automatons rather than autonomous subjects: "If they be not allowed to have reason sufficient to govern their own conduct— why, all they learn— must be learned by rote!" (193). The height of feminine achievement, other than her physical beauty, is "rote" recitation; the young woman rather functions on "rote" herself, always repeating in her own mind the directives of authority without opportunity to measure the moral worth of her actions internally. Without reason, or the rational capacity to make independent, moral decisions, women are left "groping in the dark" (67).

Wollstonecraft demonstrates the self-fulfilling prophecy of misogyny in terms closely echoing Opotow's definitions of moral exclusion. First, moral exclusion occurs when groups "are perceived as nonentities, expendable, or undeserving" (Opotow 1). Men morally exclude women as "nonentities" through the gender hierarchy predicated on false notions of female inferiority; men view women as "underserving" of genuine respect, as public ridicule, mockery, and contempt reveal; men also view women as expendable, as every feature of their upbringings renders women weak, feeble, fragile, docile, and

disposable. Once perceived as underserving of respect, the harm excluded groups suffer becomes normalized. For women, the inequitable aspects of their educations appear to be, from the misogynist viewpoint, perfectly "acceptable" in accordance with her innately inferior capacities as well as perfectly" appropriate" to the demands of her social roles (Opotow 1). It is through the theme of expendability, however, that *Rights of Woman* perhaps most severely demonstrates the deleterious consequences of moral exclusion that places women "outside the boundary in which … considerations of fairness apply" (1). Wollstonecraft explores expendability in her discussion of the discarded, fallen woman, easily victimized by the sexual double standard that unfairly stacks the decks against women and which begins to do so from their earliest developmental years.

Unsurprisingly, debilitating aspects of women's educations make them easy targets for seduction and sexual exploitation. Obedience and deference are the prized behaviors for women just as they are the prized behaviors for all inferior groups: "blind obedience is ever sought for by power, tyrants and sensualists are in the right when they endeavour to keep women in the dark, because the former only want slaves, and the latter a play-thing" (90). Men want women who "are rendered weak and wretched," whose "strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty," whose "minds … are enfeebled," and who are "so much degraded" that they can be easily "disregarded" as human beings, as wives and mothers without vital social roles to fulfill, and as non-citizens

without concerns for the moral progress of society (71-75). Wollstonecraft ascertains a connection between woman's socialization into docility and her dictated social role as man's pleasurable "play-thing." A theme of sexual corruption preoccupies *Rights of Woman*, such as in the author's frequent references to sensuality and libertinism: a woman's "body and mind are sacrificed to libertine notions of beauty, to the desire of establishing themselves,— the only way women can rise in the world,— by marriage. And this desire making mere animals of them" (74). From infancy, women are disciplined through physical and mental confinement against exercising reason while they are rewarded for dressing their dolls and, later, their own persons. Parents thus encourage females to cultivate only "corporeal accomplishments" and "personal charms" (88). Physical beauty, gentleness, silliness, innocence, and a "reputation of chastity" are the requirements for wives, the only respected social role allowed women (216). The cultural norms that regulate women's upbringings raises them to be preoccupied with own bodies, ignorant of human sexual relations, and inculcated with a desire to please men. Their mental debilitation coupled with physically dissipation is perfectly calculated to make them erotically pliable, "unfortunate victims" (222).

The sexual double standard that valorizes female chastity without the same norm for men heightens masculine pleasure in the chase and conquer of sexually ignorant women: "Unnatural distinctions regarding sexuality … put women in grave danger, not of 'falling,' but of being 'pushed'" (Sapiro 133).

Men establish the stakes in a "war between" the sexes wholly in their favor, acculturating women to be easily "duped by their lovers," and then ostracizing them from society (Wollstonecraft 90). As Sapiro sums up: "If she is unchaste, or even seems to be, she is excluded from respectable society and is condemned forever to trade on her body" (133). Sapiro's use of the word "excluded" is telling here even if her concentration is not explicitly on social injustice as exclusion. For Wollstonecraft, as in Smith, sexuality is a neutral, necessary, and acceptably enjoyable appetite. However, injustice as exclusion becomes downright perverse when it manifests specifically as *sexual* injustice as exclusion. Wollstonecraft identifies many forms of rape like sexual assault, men's "brutal indulgences" (196); mental rape, when males rob women of their own "intellects" (83); and emotional rape, when men purposefully attack the personalities and characters of women. Mary Wollstonecraft comprehends how nonrecognition of women as the worthy recipients of fair and moral treatment (moral exclusion) allows the unnatural distortion of sexuality into a vehicle by which to control women through "abuse" and terror (219).

No one grasps this more than the fallen woman: "Necessity never makes prostitution the business of men's lives; though numberless are the women who are thus rendered systematically vicious" (143). Fallen women are not just rendered abstractly invisible as voiceless and abandoned women surviving on the margins of society. Ostracized from the society of their friends and families, they are literally made invisible to their former connections and support systems

who will no longer see or help them for shame. Blockaded from redemption for their "folly," they are rendered utterly invisible through death from disease and starvation (but not before continued sexual exploitation), or what Wollstonecraft refers to as the "fatal" consequences of poverty-stricken "prostitution" (143, 219). Oxymoronic "numberless" perfectly mirrors the nonrecognition of the untold multitude of fallen "victims" (219). Nonrecognition, passed down as inherited prejudices about women manifests as very real and deadly consequences for women.

Ruinous prostitution might appear to be an extreme, even sensational, example of woman's debased social position, but for Wollstonecraft there is scant divide between the disreputable prostitute and the young lady "legally prostituted" on the marriage market (130). Both roles, prostitute or wife, reduce woman to her lowest "corporeal" "utility" to men (152, 119). Complete dependency on her husband for day-to-day "subsistence" coupled with an obligatory "obedience required of women in the marriage state" means women in either province of existence trade the "pleasure" of their bodies and reproductive labor for their bread (142, 143). The sacredness of marriage, wifehood, and motherhood is counterfeit given the actual behavior of "faithless husbands" (68). In short, even the seemingly socially "respected" status of wife exposes women to the "'injustice'" of being required "'to bear the insults of a husband without complaint'" (156). Woman's lack of dignified identity and social agency makes her a perpetual victim even to her husband. She is a victim

even here because she "tamely sits still and submits to insults" in exactly the manner that Smith calls "contemptible" for failing to preserve oneself by first apprehending the immoral actions of others upon oneself (Smith 49).

It is crucial to acknowledge Wollstonecraft's complex understanding of identity as a concept intertwined with culture and acculturation. Identity is partly the internal sense-of-self, partly how one functions in the world, and partly one's social role as perceived by the culture at large. In other words, she apprehends how identity is "handed down from above," and her analysis of women's educations and social roles seeks to "denaturalize" the identity category of woman to demonstrate how women are made, not born as such. If women have little strength of character or senses-of-self founded on moral consciences, then this is because nearly every aspect of their upbringings, the requirements of their social roles and functions, and even the representations they receive of themselves from misogynistic literary authorities impede the development of the crucial ingredient of the moral conscience, reason. They are restricted from making autonomous moral choices as well as restricted from the human agency to extend those moral decisions into independently-driven actions in the world, either in the domestic sphere of the home or the larger world of public and professional spheres outside of the home. Finally, Wollstonecraft turns her attention to assess woman's identity through her common social roles as either wife or prostitute. While the title of wife acquires social respect and the designation of prostitute garners disrepute, the author

ultimately finds both roles equally disturbing for similarly defining women by their corporeal "utility" to men (119). Woman's assigned social roles are bleak ones. But the author's purpose is not a reiteration of the negative valuation placed on the identity of woman. Rather, she engages a sustained deconstruction of the social processes by which men "render," "degrade," "weaken," and "discard" women to fabricate sexual difference through exclusionary injustice through nonrecognition (72, 124, 279, 262). In showing the ways culture (or the male arbiters of it) constructs female identity, she attempts to dismantle the very category of woman itself.

An element of dark, situational irony constantly informs *Rights of Woman*. Dismantling the construct of woman also exposes the construct of man, which Wollstonecraft also interrogates throughout the text. Man's self-empowering claim to superiority in fact conceals his debauched motives; from his positon of power, man organizes society in ways conducive to the spread of dissipation rather than the moral progress of civilization. The sexual hierarchy, intended to degrade women and empower men, has been applied to such remarkable effect that men have in fact succeeded in degrading themselves. Sexual difference, as a cultural construct, is anything but benign. When Wollstonecraft famously "throw[s] down her gauntlet," she challenges men to recognize women's duties, (in this context as mothers, teachers, household managers) as ungendered "*human* duties" (119). She raises the status of those roles into "respectable," principled, and empathically-guided social virtues (119). In other words, she

refigures women's roles, that men have based solely on bodily (even carnal) "utility," into professional occupations that require the cultivation of reason, "understanding," and the virtue of a "common sympathy" for "the moral and civil interest of mankind" (119, 217, 66).

But, she also challenges the male reader to do the same for himself—to apply a measure of his moral conscience, supposing he has one, in sustained impartial reflection upon his own virtue and fallen state. The notion of reflection is especially significant for Wollstonecraft not just as a secular concept for human cognition but also as a spiritual, meditative practice. *Rights of Woman* asks men to contemplate the nature of God against their own natures and what they have made of women. In other words, she extends her dismantling of gender distinctions into a dismantling of another, reciprocally supportive concept by which misogynistic culture elaborates hierarchal difference, in this case through a misguided conception of the Divine. Just as men have made themselves deities to women, so they hold God up as a violent manifestation of "omnipotent" supremacy: "[man's] reason is clouded by these crude opinions, even when he thinks of the Deity.— His omnipotence is made to swallow up, or preside over his other attributes" (113). Man's ultimate self-conceit is his irreverent concept of God that emphasizes divine power over divine reason.

Man's stubborn and steadfast prejudices in social hierarchies have grotesquely distorted his understanding of the divine. Man worships God's "power; he adores a dark cloud, which may open a bright prospect to him, or

burst in angry, lawless fury, on his devoted head— he knows not why" (114). In this stunning passage, Wollstonecraft articulates how God has become to man what man has become to woman; like the unpredictable, tyrannous husband or father, His is an arbitrary, capricious, demanding, and impulsive nature. Wollstonecraft deconstructs man's notion of God to poignantly reconfigure God into a rational entity. She argues, "The only solid foundation for morality appears to be the character of the supreme Being; the harmony of which arises from a balance of attributes." Appropriately, her reconfigured model of the Divinity poises justness and wisdom, omnipotence and goodness (113). If men be reasonable enough to genuinely, "humbly" embrace their own social duties to humankind, then they must shed their "deeply rooted prejudices," revise their "image of God," and exert their moral consciences to the cultivation of greater justness, wisdom, and goodness in themselves (114, 76, 133). Part of her challenge to men resides in her concept of God: a "just conception of the character of God" would "impose" upon men "wholesome restraints" (114). By "wholesome restraints" she means those social passions moderated by reason that dignify man; man's cultivation of those attributes that truly merit the name of virtue would reform the entire social fabric through human empathy, equality in friendship, and moral social cooperation. In looking to a corrected model of the divine, Wollstonecraft seeks to symbolically transform the entire social pattern upon which the identity of both sexes is conceived.

Godwin's *Caleb Williams* and Disrespect

If a phrase from *Rights of Woman* haunts Godwin's *Things as They Are*, then that phrase is "warps the understanding." While I focus on Wollstonecraft's interrogation of engendering through socialization and the sexual hierarchy for their effects on identity, *Rights of Woman* in fact interrogates repeated patterns of social hierarchies across an array of settings, as, perhaps, her examination of the conception of God suggests. As with gender and the family, she ascertains a repeated pattern of dehumanization across the hierarchies of government, notably due to "the divine right of kings" (108); social rank, from the aristocracy, to the middle class, to "the most menial servant" (259); the military, the men of which "can never" be "resolute" or "robust" since they are "well disciplined machines" who lack "vigorous faculties" and "any depth of understanding" (89); and religious organization, in a particularly literary passage that reads how professional station inscribes upon the physiognomies of "the servile dependent gait of the poor curate and the courtly mien of a bishop." In each of these examples, "subordination" "cramps … the faculties," and "warps the understanding, till men of sensibility doubt whether the expansion of intellect produces a greater portion of happiness or misery" (82-83). Wollstonecraft analyzes the ascribed status of social positions, the relative regard or disregard those positions receive in culture, the moral-social ethics of gradations of respect; and how those ascriptions affect identity by influencing the behavior received by others and affecting the subject's opportunity to cultivate his human dignity

from within. She applies and adapts Smith in her work to define human dignity in a new way that breaks with a traditional notion of dignity as the entitled deference belonging to status. She enlarges the notion of dignity to include humankind "collectively," removes it from external trappings of rank and embodiment, resituates it internally, and expands it spiritually.

I invoke Wollstonecraft for two reasons. First, just as in Wollstonecraft scholarship, scholars of *Caleb Williams* question how the novel interrogates the relationship between social environment and human subjectivity. For example, Gary Kelly forwards Godwin's intention to craft a novel that exposes social and political corruption, demonstrates the power dynamics and inevitable oppression of hierarchal social arrangements, and expresses the fear and pain of persecution for the oppressed individual within that corrupt social framework. Kelly's reading, however, concentrates on *Caleb Williams* as historical allegory and critique of Edmund Burke's politically conservative, anti-revolutionary pamphlet, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). Although Kelly acknowledges Godwin's concerns about the corrosive effects of social corruption on humanity, he does not explicate the titular protagonist's subjective experience of corruption in any sustained manner. He briefly claims that the allegorical significance of Caleb's Welsh surname carries with it a "Cambrian race" stereotype of "impetuosity," which in turn evokes the impulsivity of French revolutionaries and British reformers alike (*The English Jacobin Novel* 205). A bit later, Kelly acknowledges the "complex emotional relationship between Caleb

and Falkland," but reads the "vocabulary" through which the author expresses Caleb's "feelings" as a linguistic limitation of the author who could only draw on his own Calvinistic "feelings toward God" (208). I think Kelly misses an opportunity here. He misses the opportunity to inquire about the connection between language and theme. Caleb venerates Falkland; Falkland envisions himself Godlike. He proclaims as much by way of warning to Caleb: "You might as well think of escaping from the reach of the omnipresent God, as from mine! (140). Recollecting Wollstonecraft's analogous deconstructions of the characters of men and their mistaken conception of God, I suggest Godwin intentionally evokes a culturally flexible language of reverence applicable across different forms of social hierarchies as part of his social critique.

Caleb and Falkland are not flat allegorical symbols. Both certainly symbolize a social station, with Caleb of the peasantry and Falkland of the gentry; but both figures are dynamic, complex characters who Godwin imagines as individuals with struggles of conscience and agency. The author manipulates audience expectation and character stereotype to question cultural assumptions correlating social class to moral capacity. Through Ferdinando Falkland, the author interrogates paternalistic prejudice about the superior faculties of persons of higher rank. Falkland clings to the forms of ceremony, reputation, and the performance of his role as country squire. However, he is the furtive murderer of three people—the churlish neighboring squire, Barnabas Tyrrel, and the estimable, piteous tenant farmers, father and son Hawkins, who he allows to be

wrongfully accused and executed for Tyrrel's murder. Despite occupying a dignified social station, he is morally defective. He clings to the "ceremonials of [his] station," but his status is "a ceremonial veil" concealing degeneracy (Wollstonecraft 81, 221). Falkland cannot balance human fellowship against self-interest.

Through Caleb, the author interrogates a corresponding prejudice against the lower orders in the form of exclusionary injustice as disrespect by confronting his eighteenth-century reader's presumed prejudice of moral exclusion bound to the servant stock character. Caleb defies the stereotype of the stock servant character by being dynamic, psychologically complex, morally right, and, therefore, undeservedly but "routinely maligned [and] disparaged." Godwin's work through Caleb functions on two levels. First, his fiction imitates "everyday life interactions" by presenting the constant threats to the aspirations and moral identity in the lives of humble people (Fraser 7). Relentless oppression and abuses of authority threaten to "warp" Caleb's moral identity, but Godwin does not morally exclude Caleb as a subject even as the prejudicial social actors of his imagined social matrix do. *Caleb Williams* thus also challenges how literature influences society through representation, how disrespectful stereotype emboldens readers to abuse their humble "neighbors" (McGirr 3). Mr. Collins acts as key to understanding Godwin's departure from stereotype since Collins, fellow servant of Caleb within the Falkland household, clings to his ingrained paternalistic prejudice that places greater human and moral value on

his betters rather than his equals. Collins exhibits considerable fellowship and sympathy with Caleb. He is neither unsympathetic nor iniquitous, but, he ultimately fails his friend and the cause of social justice when he neglects the finer appeals of conscience for prejudice.

Scholars have often been at a loss to locate Godwin's moral instruction to the lower-class reader, however, I locate his unobtrusive instruction in the contrasting responses characters make to conscience that accumulate in either just or unjust treatment in their daily interactions with others and through the themes of disrespect and dignity. Like Wollstonecraft, Godwin calls into question the correlation between human dignity and social status, relocating dignity internally rather than centered on the mandated conduct of rank and deference. In this section, I investigate Godwin's social commentary through three characters, Caleb, Falkland, and Collins. Guided by the work of McGirr and Nash, I attend to character sketches to demonstrate how Godwin creates incongruous cues to characterization that demand readers attend to character behavior and moral judgments counter to social stereotype. *Caleb Williams* challenges eighteenth-century reader expectation; like Collins, readers would have assumed the moral superiority of the upper-class figure and the suspect morality of the lower-class figure. None of Godwin's characters are flat, or lacking internal sympathy; likewise, Godwin's characterization is not simple reversal of typography, to apply McGirr's term. All three figures appeal to reader sympathy and exhibit moments of empathy and struggles of conscience.

The author's commentary thus resides in degrees of moral aptitude and the striving for human agency against externally imposed obstacles and ingrained cultural prejudices. He finds dignity in the strivings of conscience and characters' resolves to exert the dictates of conscience.

Caleb and Falkland reflect the ill-effects of their social stations on human identity and dignity, and they do so in particularly Wollstonecraftian ways. This brings me to my second reason for invoking Wollstonecraft. I argue that, like Wollstonecraft, Godwin assimilates a Smithian model of the interplay between human cognition and the social environment into his characterization technique. Scholars mention, as a matter of course, Godwin's innovations in characterization that usher in a new era of psychological complexity for the novel between the French-Revolutionary and Romantic periods. Oddly, no critic has ever explained exactly what those innovations are. I contend that Godwin achieves that complexity by writing the imagined dialogue of the self; or, put a slightly different way, he portrays the interior reflection of the impartial spectator imagined as dialogue. The author shows the competing demands of Caleb's unsocial passions, like fear, hope, or anger, and the social passions, like esteem, friendship, humanity, and kindness. His is a complicated struggle to cultivate that moral conscience and then to apply that faculty to negotiate between his needs for self-preservation; his needs for the approbation, even love, of his fellows; and his need to honor the sacred rules of society even as he is torn between competing sets of "sacred rules" (Adam Smith 145)

I want to draw attention to three passages from Godwin's initial character sketch of his protagonist, articulated through Caleb as retrospective narrator. The first of these passages draws attention to Caleb's sheltered existence, social position, and mental faculties: "But I had an inquisitive mind, and neglected no means of information from conversation or books. My improvement was greater than my condition in life afforded room to expect" (3). The second passage again mentions the protagonist's eagerness to educate himself and highlights his lack of worldly experience: "Though I was not a stranger to books, I had no practical acquaintance with men. I had never had occasion to address a person of this elevated rank, and I felt no small uneasiness and awe on the present occasion" (4). The third passage conveys Caleb's emotional response upon this first interaction with Falkland:

> My reception was as gracious and encouraging as I could possibly desire. Mr Falkland questioned me respecting my learning, and my conceptions of men and things, and listened to my answers with condescension and approbation. This kindness soon restored to me a considerable part of my self-possession, though I still felt restrained by the graceful, but unaltered dignity of his carriage. 4

Godwin's introductory character sketch already cuts against literary convention and stock stereotype. In *Servants and Paternalism*, Nash explores two conflicting, well-established "literary stereotypes" with the servant as either "blindly faithful domestic family retainer" or the servant as "selfishly scheming family destroyer"

(4). Common to both stereotypes is a stock servant character who inhabits a marginal place in the narrative and lacks a "private life" of human depth, psychological complexity, emotional range, and interior transformation. The servant is a childish, mentally underdeveloped, immoral or amoral subject. He is either immorally depraved or amorally simpleminded with neither a personal life nor internal identity outside of the occupation that encompasses him. At this earliest point in the narrative, disillusioned, retrospective, and *reflective* Caleb recounts his social positon born of peasant parents who are already deceased and the circumstances that led him into service for Falkland. Godwin already cuts against literary convention by centering his story on a servant's history, but retrospective narration contributes a distinct layer of richness and complexity since it is, by definition, the imagined personal reflections of that narrator on the events of his own life. The entirety of *Caleb Williams* is a servant's sustained introspection; this servant is the novel's emotional center, its psychological moral conscience, and its cultural commentator.

The entirety of *Caleb Williams* is the protagonist's sustained introspection, and the passages above draw attention to the tensions between his mental faculties, artlessness, and social position. He is young, actively curious, and keen to learn. His social position, or, rather, the conditions implicit to his social position, closely parallel the middle-class, female subject who Wollstonecraft defends from ridicule for rote learning and who she cautions against overly imbibing in sensationalistic novels. Wollstonecraft has an ambivalent opinion on

the effects of novel reading; Godwin's sketch of Caleb incorporates these same ambivalences. On one hand, young women read novels because it is "the only improvement … their station in society" allows them "to acquire" (131). In strikingly similar prose, Caleb's mental improvement from reading surpasses that which his lower-class station typically permits. On the other hand, Wollstonecraft worries how frivolous reading overexcites rather than "regulates the imagination" (131). Readers suspect Caleb's over-indulgence of books has over-activated his imagination when he recalls his over-enthusiastic interest in Falkland, "I was excited by every motive of interest and curiosity to study my master's character, and I found in it an ample field for speculation and conjecture" (5). Yet, "any kind of reading" beats none since "the mind" craves "enlargement" through the "exertion of its thinking powers" (Wollstonecraft 272). Godwin iterates his protagonist's psychological demand for the sustenance of intellectual activities in the first passage with the words "inquisitive, "mind," "information," "conversation," and "books." Yet again, overstimulated imaginations, social inexperience, and daily monotony all contribute to rendering women easy victims of sexual folly (Wollstonecraft 272). Godwin points to similar features of Caleb's upbringing; he is overly bookish, unsophisticated, and discomforted by social interaction due to his sheltered and isolated life: "In early life my mind had been almost wholly engrossed by reading and reflexion. My intercourses with my fellow mortals were occasional and short" (5). Godwin thus constructs him as exhibiting those mental faculties

of inquiry and imagination, as achieving more than typical for a peasant, but also suggests that Caleb's learning coupled with worldly inexperience may leave him vulnerable to folly.

But, these passages mainly convey promise and fortune for juvenile Caleb. He appears exceptional: exceptionally bright and exceptionally fortunate to come under the benevolent, notice of his social better. But herein lie two competing notions of dignity that Godwin demands his readers consider throughout the novel. One version of dignity relates to Falkland's practical social status as a man of rank with the power of patronage. He is condescending to Caleb in a particularly positive sense for this period. Samuel Johnson defines "condescension" as "'to depart from the privileges of superiority by a voluntary submission; to sink willingly to equal terms with inferiours'" (Miller 241). Falkland decorously acts the generous patron to Caleb in humbly engaging the young man in courteous conversation and in setting him at ease in his presence. The squire's conduct bespeaks his "dignity," which Godwin means in a very traditional sense here. Falkland's dignity specifically refers to his privileged social status and the visible signs of that status: his manner of speaking, his formal observance of decorum, and his deportment as a gentleman.

Meanwhile, these passages present readers with a second notion of dignity allied to Caleb's human capacity. Godwin's iterations and reiterations of Caleb's inquisitive mind; the demands of his mental faculties; his narrating and interpreting the events of his life; and, especially, his deciphering the behavior

and character of Falkland all point to cognition and conscience. The third passage is particularly rich for its double-layered meaning of dignity since it contains words that signal the customs of rank and deference and words that allude to Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*. Caleb properly observes the discreet conduct expected by social custom. At the same time, the words "restrained" and "approbation" echo Smith's hypothetical school-youth motivated by the need for esteem, who acquires self-command, or "self-possession," by closely observing whether his behavior meets the "approbation" or "disapprobation" of others (Smith 145). Godwin displays his protagonist's demands of the mind and needs of the heart, or passions. Caleb engages his critical faculty when he searches Falkland's conduct for approval and governs his own behavior accordingly; he may experience the unsocial passion of trepidation upon meeting Falkland, but it is the more sacred, social passion of esteem that prompts his self-control and immediate admiration for his new benefactor. However brief, Godwin's character sketch of Caleb presents a second notion of dignity unyoked to social status and defined as the intrinsic value of personhood by virtue of the rational faculty which, when motivated by esteem, can translate into social cooperation and fellowship.

All sounds promising for Caleb as an imagined subject and as an unconventionally dynamic character, but his recollection of promise has already been framed by catastrophe: "My fame, as well as my happiness, has become his victim. Every one, as far as my story has been known, has refused to assist me in

my distress, and has execrated my name" (3). Caleb's youth, inexperience, and, perhaps, overreaching the normally accepted limits of his station have indeed resulted in folly: "Hitherto I had had no intercourse with the world and its passions; and, though I was not totally unacquainted with them as they appear in books, this proved to be of little service to me when I came to witness them myself" (103). He is defamed and cast off by all who know him. His circumstance calls to mind the fallen woman, ostracized from good society, and cast off to be forever forgotten by friends and family. If it was customary to blame the social inferior for her own victimization, then it is reasonable to imagine that the original audience would have held Caleb suspect for his own desolation and defamation and deserving of Falkland's persecution. Indeed, the fate of the Hawkinses exposes the disrespect of a rampant blaming-the-victim prejudice that cannot distinguish between social status and authentic character. Godwin does not yet disclose Caleb's folly, but he manipulates literary and cultural bias to establish a gripping and perplexing atmosphere. The author already conveys several incongruities. The greatest of these incongruities is between reader-expectation of literary convention and the unexpected experience of reading a narrative told through the imagined consciousness of a servant. But there are other, more detailed and equally provocative inconsistencies between Caleb's reversal of fortune from early promise to later defamation, Caleb's emotional shift from admiration to animosity for Falkland, and Falkland's apparent alteration from benevolent patron to persecutor. These

incongruities prompt questions about who these characters truly are, by what means Caleb's life deteriorated, and what has he done to deserve his fate.

Godwin drizzles Caleb's identity in incongruity, but he steeps Falkland's in it. Godwin asks readers "to decode potentially deceptive signs and therefore to read moral characters properly" by "exposing and delineating [a] divergence between appearance and essence," and he does so through the simultaneously critical and naïve lens of Caleb (McGirr 3). Readers first learn of Falkland as Caleb does—by reputation. Mr. Falkland is a cultured, "benevolent" "country squire of considerable opulence." Imposing! How perplexing, then, is Caleb's observation of Falkland's actual physical presence:

> I found Mr Falkland a man of small stature, with an extreme delicacy of form and appearance. In place of the hard-favoured and inflexible visages I had been accustomed to observe, every muscle and petty line of his countenance seemed to be in an inconceivable degree pregnant with meaning. His manner was kind, attentive and humane. His eye was full of animation, but there was a grave and sad solemnity in his air, which for want of experience I imagined was the inheritance of the great, and the instrument by which the distance between them and their inferiors was maintained. His look bespoke the unquietness of his mind, and frequently wandered with an expression of disconsolateness and anxiety. 4
>
> …

> He was compassionate and considerate for others, though the stateliness of his carriage and the reserve of his temper were at no time interrupted. His appearance and general behaviour might have strongly interested all persons in his favour; but the coldness of his address and the impenetrableness of his sentiments seemed to forbid those demonstrations of kindness to which one might otherwise have been prompted. 6

I note above the particular literariness of Wollstonecraft's passage contrasting the curate to the bishop. I say this because her physiognomonic illustration briefly links external appearance, or at least demeanor and bearing, to the inner, emotional condition of her contrasted cleric figures. Her technique recalls McGirr's discussion of the eighteenth-century character and the significant role physiognomic description plays across all artistic genres in this period. The typographical character sketches that sprang up to immediate popularity in the seventeenth century straightforwardly aligned external appearance to inner qualities: "the characters' inner worth can be read by their external appearance." By the end of the eighteenth-century, coinciding with the development of the novel, characterization becomes more complex. Outer appearance increasingly obscures moral worth: "Experience seemed more likely to expose a disjunction rather than a correlation between the physical and the moral: eighteenth-century literature is full of bad hearts masked by good faces." McGirr finds this disjunction especially true of novels of "the Romantic movement" that were concerned with the dichotomy between social "artifice" and human authenticity

(1-2). The incongruity between Falkland's reputation and his appearance suggests Godwin's Romantic interest in the difference between artifice and authenticity. These two passages cover almost the entirely of Godwin's initial character sketch of Falkland. This squire's physiognomy contradicts his imposing reputation. Readers are meant to attend to those recurring details of smallness: Falkland's insignificant physique, his almost feminine fragility, softness and fineness of facial expression. His deportment never varies even as his affect does. In both passages, his affect is changeable. He moves between a moment of warmness and vivid liveliness, to a moment of severity and lackluster flatness, to a moment of fretfulness and overanxious distraction. Falkland is compelling and off-putting, sympathetic to others but repels sympathy from others. The finer aspects of Godwin's phrasing are just as inharmonious. Falkland is both great and small. The smallest line of Falkland's face contains within it unimaginable significance. His glance is vibrant, but his disposition is somber.

These passages present Caleb's critical gaze, emphasize Falkland's inconsistencies, and ask the reader to exercise her judgment. Like the eighteenth-century reader, Caleb examines Falkland's physiognomy. Reading books disposes him to critical observation of the world and people around him, but is he over-reading? Language in phrases like "inconceivable degree pregnant with meaning" and "ample field for speculation and conjecture" serve Godwin's craft in suspense, but they also beg the reader to make judgments about Caleb's

naiveté and Falkland's moral identity. Caleb echoes Wollstonecraft's easily duped, bookish young lady and prefigures Jane Austen's heroine in *Northanger Abbey* (1817), Catherine Morland, who superimposes Gothic mystery onto otherwise nonthreatening circumstances. She misreads manners and motives; for instance, she misinterprets the respectable manner of concealing private grief as suspiciously concealing a murderous misdeed. The social politeness of concealing grief may be nonthreatening, but Catherine's invasion of the familial privacy of her acquaintances is not; her impropriety leads to the considerable embarrassment of her friends and shame to herself. Godwin relates something similar here of Caleb. Quite by accident, Caleb stumbles upon a deeply anguished Falkland examining the contents of a chest. Falkland reproaches him for interrupting an emotional and private moment: "Wretch, interrupted Mr Falkland with uncontrolable impatience, you want to ruin me. You set yourself as a spy upon my actions. But bitterly shall you repent your insolence. Do you think you shall watch my privacies with impunity?" (6-7). Caleb retells the inappropriately violent reaction that casts suspicion upon his employer, the moment in which Falkland's artifice cracks and his ceremonial veil of reserved manner threatens to unshroud the private emotions he prefers to conceal, but is Caleb morally right to scrutinize his employer so intrusively?

Caleb's is a breach of the conduct expected of a servant, a breach of deference required of him within the paternalistic social hierarchy. However, his rational review of all the evidence he soon learns proves him correct to suspect

Falkland. Caleb's continued spying disrespects his benefactor, but Falkland has killed Tyrrel and has allowed the decent father and son Hawkins to be executed by hanging. Godwin thus establishes two competing claims, or sacred rules, for Caleb. The first of these sacred rules is to the traditional social order in which he, the servant, ought to abide by a deferential code of conduct assigned to him from above and which allots the privileges of privacy, judgment, and oversight to his social better. From this perspective, Caleb's intrusiveness uncovers a crime about which he has no ethical basis to investigate and which would be better forgotten if exposing it meant destabilizing the established social order by the death of a gentleman. His social position places him in a trap of injustice as exclusion through moral exclusion. If he betrays Falkland, then he appears self-serving like the shrewd servant who secretly loathes his employer; this stock type certainly has the intelligence to understand morality but he runs counter to it. Therefore, he is morally excluded as inherently incapable due to a "vicious," self-serving nature threatening to social order (Godwin 288). If Caleb retains Falkland's secret in service to his patron by deferring his own sense of moral rectitude to the supposedly better judgment of his superior, then he becomes the simpleminded servant. He may not violate the social order, but he is still morally disrespected because he lacks full cognizance regarding why he abides by the rules handed down to him from authority, rules that permit the wrongful murder of innocents.

Collins articulates this exact dilemma when he asks Caleb what purpose convincing him of Falkland's guilt would serve:

> And what benefit will result from this conviction? I have known you a promising boy, whose character might turn to one side or the other as events should decide. I have known Mr Falkland in his maturer years, and have always admired him as the living model of liberality and goodness. If you could change all my ideas, and show me that there was no criterion by which vice might be prevented from being mistaken for virtue, what benefit would arise from that? I must part with all my interior consolation, and all my external connections. And for what? What is it you propose? The death of Mr Falkland by the hands of the hangman? 287-288

Collins speaks "conventional morality," or the "'practical wisdom' of the world to dictate right and wrong" (Nash 65); he comprehends full well how one man's virtue is another man's vice when self-interests compete. He devotes himself to retaining the gentleman's secrets, rather turning a deliberate blind eye, to subscribe to the paternal social hierarchy. Nash understands paternalistic subscription by servant characters as indicative of their lack of agency in works prior to the nineteenth century, but Godwin presents Collins in a more complicated way. Collins is no "comic fumbler straight out of the long tradition of incompetent servants" (Nash 61). His moral conscience, or impartial spectator, displays here in his deliberation between his two competing notions of dignity and genuine affection for Caleb and Falkland; he also weighs the

potential good or evil that can come from either man's final proof of innocence or guilt. He may subscribe to conventional morality for the servant to defer to the judgment of his employer, but he does this with awareness of the implications of his choice. From his view, Caleb is a "machine … not constituted to be greatly useful to [his] fellow men" since he seems unable to set aside his self-interest in proving his own innocence when it would mean proving the guilt of his better, a man upon whom so many depend (288). He chooses a social framework that has offered him, and by implication most individuals of the lower orders, certainty—physical safety, emotional esteem, moral clarity, and sense of purpose—and he advises Caleb to do the same.

If Mr. Collins seems to turn a rather deliberate blind eye to Falkland's potential criminality, it is not without a reasonable basis. The bulk of Volume I and the first chapter of Volume II consist of Caleb's purportedly verbatim record of the village conflicts and cruelties told him by Collins. Falkland persistently acted the rational mediator for social good and advocate for the victims of Tyrrel's violence. Falkland honorably intervened in the abysmal history of Emily Melville. He saved her from death by fire and rape, but she nonetheless died resisting the legally permissible persecution by her cousin and guardian, Tyrrel. Falkland similarly intervened with moral counsel, advising Tyrrel to moderate his behavior with compassion, temperance, and benevolence toward the Hawkinses. Tyrrel again ruined his social subordinates. Collins then relates the public condemnation of Tyrrel for Emily's wrongful death; his subsequent public

beating of Falkland; Falkland's trial and acquittal for Tyrrel's murder; and the succeeding conviction and hanging of the Hawkinses for the same crime. But Collins is more correct than he knows when he comments on the utter annihilation of Falkland's sense of internal dignity upon the public beating and trial: "To Mr Falkland disgrace was worse than death. The slightest breath of dishonour would have stung him to the very soul. What must it have been with this complication of ignominy, base, humiliating and public?" (93). Nothing "could ever remove the stain" from Falkland's hitherto unblemished reputation, since "No man had ever held his reputation so dear to him as Mr Falkland" (95-96). He later describes the complete alteration in Falkland, from a man secure in his "self-approving and heart-transporting benevolence … who had lived beyond any man upon the grand and animating reveries of the imagination, seemed now to have no visions but of anguish and despair" (94). Falkland is dynamic as a character because his crisis alters his identity, but that change is disastrous for his fragile identity and for social welfare. Collins, like young Caleb, mistakes the subtle difference between the performance of benevolence, chivalry, and decorum with authentic friendship and empathy.

If readers experience sympathy for Falkland, it is because Godwin guides that sympathy through Collins's perception. Readers are meant to be more critical, perhaps by asking how the Hawkinses might judge Falkland just as Caleb does, as one of the victimized. Falkland's moral limitation compares to Wollstonecraft's female subject who "cautiously preserves her reputation free

from spot," and who is, therefore, "reckoned a good kind of woman" (117). Never allowed to "judge for herself," reputation is a necessary ceremony for her social status as "good woman." Or, more accurately, he is the courtier who Wollstonecraft associates as similarly conforming to forms over substance:

> Whence arises the easy fallacious behaviour of a courtier? From his situation, undoubtedly: for standing in need of dependents, he is obliged to learn the art of denying without giving offence, and, of evasively feeding hope with the chameleon's food: thus does politeness sport with truth, and eating away the sincerity and humanity natural produce the fine gentleman. 210

Falkland's dignified identity is inextricably bound to his social standing, less obviously to his wealth as much as the public perception of his benevolence: he "would have purchased the character of a true, gallant and undaunted hero at the expence of worlds" and "thought every calamity … a stain upon his honour." Godwin points to Falkland's self-interest in a word—"fame" (100). Fame is the ultimate self-aggrandizement, the intense and narcissistic magnification of oneself in the world through the visibility of status. Falkland mistakes the public appearance of virtue for authentic dignity, performing benevolence for his own status with limited, authentic sympathy for his inferiors. He pities them but does not respect them; he helps them but does not love them, at least, not enough. The agonizing limitation of Collins's moral insight resides in his correct understanding of moral conduct but his mislaid judgment of authentic character.

He states how his own sympathy, like the general public's "compassion," turned against Hawkins as a "barbarous" coward for not coming "boldly forward to meet the consequences of his own conduct, [rather] than suffer a man of so much public worth as Mr Falkland … to be tried for a murder that he had committed" (102). Collins rightly comprehends ethical moral action when judging members of his own social class, but he exhibits an exceptionalist attitude for his social superiors.

What is the alternative, then? Modern readers want the narrative to offer positive valence for a second set of "sacred rules" that counter the "conventional morality" of paternalism. It does to an uncertain extent. Respecting the dictates of his own conscience dignifies Caleb as a subject, but claiming dignity in a hostile social environment carries the price of physical confinement and social alienation. As this novel becomes one of flight and pursuit, the protagonist's ever-expanding world is in fact bitterly ironic as he suffers multiple imprisonments and escapes, emotional dejection and resolution, frequent sympathy for others and his own increasing alienation. The plot of *Caleb Williams; or, Things as They Are* offers no shortage of disrespectful or malicious events. It is relentless. In many ways, the plot closely resembles the slave narrative. William L. Andrews's "An Introduction to the Slave Narrative," (2004) offers a concise but superlative summary of the structure and content of the slave narrative as an autobiographical account written by a fugitive slave that

"portrays the condition of slavery as a form of extreme physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual deprivation, a kind of hell on earth:"

> Precipitating the narrator's decision to escape is some sort of personal crisis, such as the sale of a loved one or a dark night of the soul in which hope contends with despair for the spirit of the slave. Impelled by faith in God and a commitment to liberty and human dignity … the slave undertakes an arduous quest for freedom

If I replaced the word "slave" with "servant," this summary would be wholly accurate of *Caleb Williams*. The earlier slave narratives, like Cugoano's *Thoughts and Sentiments*, portray the narrator's pre-enslaved life to a state of innocence. Slave traders coerce the naïve, often very young, African into slavery either by trickery or violence, which is the moment of that narrator's fall from innocence into a life of tyranny. Now enslaved, the African suffers the unspeakable violence of terror, imprisonment, forced migration, beating, rape, exposure, malnourishment, and alienation. Caleb suffers in parallel ways. *Caleb Williams* is a first-person account of the tragedies and humiliations suffered by its protagonist. Caleb describes his humble parentage and his youthful innocence that is "free from the usual sources of depravity." He "has no practical acquaintance with men," lives in a "remote county of England," and has a "rudimentary" education. Much as Africans were imagined as primitive, so Caleb is rustic; much as Africans were imagined as geographically obscure, so Caleb is isolated; and much as Africans were imagined as simple, so Caleb is

uncultivated. Parentless, propertyless, penniless, and prospectless, Caleb is already alienated, but his migration to service under Falkland, precipitates Caleb's fall into a "deserted situation with terror." Proslavery rhetoric reads black skin as a mark for perpetual servitude. Caleb writes: "I have been a mark for the vigilance of tyranny, and I could not escape. My fairest prospects have been blasted. My enemy has shown himself inaccessible to intreaties and untired in persecution" (Godwin 1-5).

Godwin echoes Cugoano's infernal scene of the thunderous cries of enchained thousands, with Africans beseeching, grieving, praying, battling, mutinying, fleeing, and dying at the many hands of European captors and tormenters. Falkland terrorizes Caleb with constant oversight, coercion, emotional manipulation, postures of superiority and divine right, public defamation, malnourishment, multiple imprisonments, capture and recapture, and a fugitive-servant advertisement. Godwin depicts a moment of Caleb's despair: "Among my melancholy reflections I tasked my memory, and counted over the doors, the locks, the bolts, the chains, the massy and grated windows that were between me and liberty" (175). The following passage conveys a moment of crisis for Caleb who contemplates flight: "Escape from his pursuit, freedom from his tyranny, were objects upon which my whole soul was bent; could no human ingenuity and exertion effect them?" (233). Caleb discovers fortitude: "I resolved that I would not remain quiescent, till mischief should overtake and devour me" (259). Some pages later, a reiterative passage conjoins

Caleb's fortitude to hope, and hope to resistance: "Yet I was not cast down. I resolved that, while I had life, I would never despair. Oppressed, annihilated I might be; but, if I died, I would die resisting" (266). Like his enslaved counterpart, fugitive servant, Caleb, resists and flees into an uncertain future.

Caleb achieves moral dignity because he chooses that uncertainty. He follows the dictates of his own conscience but his is a process of negotiation between competing demands for self-preservation and conflicting social allegiances often without clear answers. He vows to keep Falkland's secret, but Falkland's obsessive surveillance and his own guilt smother him. He resolves on an alternative to keep Falkland's secret but liberate himself. He flees, and so ensues the flight and pursuit plot that for which this novel is so famous. Caleb fears and reveres, hates and loves, hides and confronts, is accused and accuses. His is a circuitous journey in which he negotiates the competing demands of his own sense of moral right, his allegiance to his patron, the temptations of "'practical wisdom'" that would offer him succor, and a struggle to maintain a sense of personhood (Nash 65). Time and again, Godwin displays that negotiated personhood through the imagined internal debate between the passions and the impartial spectator:

> I had now every thing to fear. And yet what was my fault? It proceeded from none of those errors which are justly held up to the aversion of mankind; my object had been neither wealth, nor the means of indulgence, nor the usurpation of power. No spark of malignity had

> harboured in my soul. I had always reverenced the sublime mind of Mr Falkland; I reverenced it still. My offence had merely been a mistaken thirst of knowledge. 130

Caleb expresses competing emotions. He does not just exist in reactionary or instinctive fear like Adam Smith's infant; rather he knows he has very real cause to fear. He nonetheless engages in rational meditation; his rational faculty allows him to command his fear and to examine his motives from the perspective of the imagined moral spectator. No unjust, unsocial, self-serving passion motivated his discovery or his flight. Even as he has been imprisoned and publically maligned, he still respects Falkland and honors his promise to secrecy. But, at this relatively early point in his persecution, he cannot accept how his social position occludes his "knowing," forbids him epistemic justice as an accurate judge of character, ethics, or truth. Indeed, he will not accept this injustice.

Flight offers no freedom, even as it offers worldly experience. Most scholarship finds itself at a loss to locate Godwin's instruction to the lower-class audience. I assert that Godwin instructs that audience through the relentless striving of Caleb to exert his agency in the world, and to repel, revenge, or repair the insults against him; he not only adheres to the dictates of conscience but he also resists the perversion, or "warping," of his understanding. Godwin illustrates the detrimental consequences of social subornation on Caleb but he also imbues Caleb with acute sensibility and the self-reflective faculty. Upon entering service to Falkland as librarian and secretary, young Caleb occupies that

expanding social matrix required to cultivate the higher-level faculty of the impartial spectator that defines human dignity. Readers witness Caleb's world expand. Unfortunately, his expanding social matrix does not coincide with the Smithian ideal of home, to school, to profession, to promotion, to political post. Smith's archetypal subject occupies a social position far above peasant Caleb's. Therefore, Caleb's expanding social matrix works in rather reverse order in ironic tension with Smith's *Theory*. He certainly has wider experiences in the world, however, his is a story of short-lived service and sharpening subordination even as his plight, indeed flight, from manic Falkland carries him hundreds of miles across the English countryside, to London, and to Wales.

Godwin asks, in echo of Wollstonecraft, whether those expanding experiences, topographical and emotional, "produce a greater portion of happiness or misery" (83). Godwin answers this question in very short order: "I little suspected that the gaiety and lightness of heart I had hitherto enjoyed were upon the point of leaving me for ever, and that the rest of my days were devoted to misery," narrates wiser Caleb (5). Defamed Caleb writes in "faint" hope for future "justice" (3). That future justice comes to pass in the last chapter. Caleb explains his rationale for finally pursuing legal justice: "It appeared therefore to my mind to be a mere piece of equity and justice, such as an impartial spectator would desire, that one person should be miserable in preference to two." For the "general good," he reasons, either he or Falkland must suffer final legal judgment so at least one of them can reengage in a productive life. He gives up

his "state of uncertainty" for resolution (295-296). Resolution carries unexpected and disastrous consequences. Caleb, upon finally seeing the wasted Falkland again, overcome with compassion, unable to stop legal proceedings, grasps the full weight of his actions—he will become Falkland's defamer and murderer. Legal justice means the reinstatement of social position but at the purchase of his conscience; claiming dignity of conscience means the injustice of dispossessed social position. In his final lines, Caleb avows, "I have now no character that I wish to vindicate" because he has exchanged dignity of social station at the cost of his dignity of personhood (303). He has quenched his thirst for knowledge, but that knowledge makes his suffering more acute.

CHAPTER III

DEFINING INJUSTICE AS MALDISTRIBUTION AND DEHUMANIZATION

One passage from Wollstonecraft's chapter, "On National Education" should haunt all her readers for its penetrating sensitivity and for its profound implications about the pervasive nature of violence in her culture. Mary Wollstonecraft strikingly advocates for "Humanity to animals," to be incorporated into a national co-education system (258). Her animal rights advocacy is not striking because of its modern sensibility so similar to our own or even for her blunt recognition that humane treatment toward animals "is not at present one of [Britain's] national virtues" (258). Rather, what arrests the reader is that the "habitual cruelty" referred to in this chapter specifically refers to young boys who frequently "torment" "miserable brutes" as a singular pastime while at boarding school. Wollstonecraft's concern here is not just the treatment of animals, but the easy "transition" between violence to animals and violence to people; the same cruel boarding-school boys will inevitably transfer "barbarity to brutes" to their "wives, children, and servants" when adult masters of households (258).

The connection between a boy's cruelty to animals and his later murderous impulse was not an altogether new dialogue in eighteenth-century British culture. William Hogarth's *The Four Stages of Cruelty* (1751) illustrates just such a degeneration more than thirty years prior to the publication of *Rights of*

Woman. The "First Stage of Cruelty" depicts a gang of twenty-two ferocious youngsters strangling, cauterizing, cockfighting, gouging, disemboweling, thrashing, and impaling— through the anus, no less —dogs, cats, and birds, all in view of church. Hogarth's central figure, Tom Nero, impales the dog through the rectum, while a nearby spectator sketches his sure death by hanging, which has already ensued by the final and fourth plate of the series. In the "Second Stage of Cruelty," Tom Nero, now a hackney-coach driver, mercilessly beats his emaciated and collapsed horse in full view of the four bewigged lawyers who occupy the toppled carriage, while a shepherd clubs a lamb to death, a toddler gets trampled by a beer cart, a farmer prods an overburdened donkey with his pitchfork, and a group of boys bait a bull. "Cruelty in Perfection" illustrates Tom's complete descent into criminality, now a thief and murderer, caught quite literally red-handed, having just gashed open the throat and mutilated the remains of his pregnant lover, Ann Gill. A letter in the foreground from Ann to Tom conveys how she has obeyed his commands to rob her benevolent employer against her own conscience but for love of Tom. Now, she lies prone in the dirt of a graveyard, conspicuously in view of a church bell tower and the whitewashed estate that hovers on a hill at a safely gated distance directly above her.

Like Wollstonecraft, Hogarth presents violence to animals as degenerative, communally contagious, and socially sanctioned. The writer and the artist each presents emblems of the absent overseer of authority. In

Wollstonecraft's passage on school-boy animal cruelty, that non-presence is the schoolmaster who is not instructing children in compassion. It is the young man's singular lack of fellow-feeling and pleasure in physical violence initially for animals that eventually founds and pervades the households of eighteenth-century Britons, which consisted of wives, children, and servants; thus for Wollstonecraft the violence of the family makes this common institution an inherently exploitive and disempowering one for most of its members. In Hogarth, the absence of the regulation of brutality comes in the forms of additional institutions like the church, the law, and the benevolent master or mistress under whose aloof eyes violence worsens. Hogarth requires the viewer ask if Ann's life is worth as little as the tortured animals or as much as the rather insignificant trinkets that she has stolen, since the shadow of authority only catches Tom after his criminal behavior becomes a threat to upper-class property in terms of goods and servants, not to mention his implicitly exploitative abuse of Ann's socially appropriate feminine naiveté. What Hogarth and Wollstonecraft demonstrate through their distinctive expressive mediums is the link between violence to animals and viewing people as animals, which is the core of dehumanization.

Hogarth makes violence directly visible while the writers of this study convey violence more indirectly though linguistic imagery; however hyperbolic his illustrations may be, *The Four Stages of Cruelty* offers provocative context for considering the recurrent animal imagery and motifs of violence that preoccupy

the work of Wollstonecraft, Godwin, and Cugoano. Animal images abound in these three authors' texts—cows, horses, devils, mice, monkeys, insects, swarms, elephants, dogs, pigs, demons, crocodiles, asses, spaniels, leopards, sheep, tigers, cats, monsters, lions, beasts, and, most frequently, brutes. Images of animals work in tandem with motifs of violence, most obvious of which are the recurrent references to whips, chains, shackles, fetters, yokes, gibbets, prisons, deprivations, tortures, pursuits, and rapes—all objects or acts that inflict corporeal pain, confinement, or neglect. Less obviously, accusations of weakness, feebleness, incapacity, barbarity, or disability also become acts of cruelty insofar as they contribute to defining persons and groups as subhuman, thus inflicting emotional, cultural, psychological, or spiritual violence.

To make the effects of violence visible, all three authors work through recurrent images of animals accompanied by motifs and analyses of violence; I argue that in so doing, they identify a process of violent dehumanization that is at the core of social injustice through disempowerment, a process of injustice that Bufacchi defines as the exposure and exploitation of "a person's vulnerabilities" (10).

Bufacchi assesses disempowerment as the exposure of vulnerability, an unfortunate phrasing which leaves open the argument that some persons may be naturally inferior; my writers, by contrast, display vulnerability as a process altogether forcefully and systemically rendered—they reject notions of natural inferiority to show how acts of violence along a spectrum of brutality and across a wide range of contexts create vulnerability to first dehumanize and then to

disempower masses of humankind. Violence is predicated on social disrespect and enacted through systemic denials of resources and goods required for survival. My brief illustration through Hogarth suggests that those resources and goods can take on broad meaning as he points to several systemic causes that permit or even cause neglect, poverty, and the violence that results. He also displays violence in both active and passive forms, the boys who actively tortures animals and who later become murderers of women and the seemingly passive institutions of the Church, the estate, the law, the economy, and the academic and medical professions—all institutions regulated by educated men who apparently lack the moral conscience to intervene in any of these incidents of violence. Hogarth's pictures of absent Church leaders, self-absorbed lawyers, and inhumane surgeons begs the viewer ask how these men, too, must be implicated in those institutions that perhaps help create the socioeconomic conditions in which systemic violence occurs.

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Two under injustice as exclusion. Now this chapter takes a longer look at how exclusion translates into systemic socioeconomic forms of deprivation, marginalization, and exploitation that is injustice as maldistribution. Bufacchi attempts to separate injustice as maldistribution from injustice as disempowerment, but this division is not possible when studying the work of Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, or Godwin. These authors read denials of resources as morally threatening and life threatening acts of violence along a spectrum of cruelty in which maldistributive denials create profound forms of vulnerability which are always exploited.

Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin, writing in a period before the rise and prevalence of identity politics, perhaps have more a comprehensive understanding of the manufacture of inferiority through multiple paradigms of injustice. In claiming the human status of women, workers, or slaves, all three authors avoid the pitfalls of essentialist arguments. Instead they interrogate and deconstruct how the identities of women, workers, or slaves are made and for what reasons. To do so, they consistently look to the social environment for answers about how identity is constructed from above to complement their concurrent claims of human worth founded on the notion of universal human dignity. For example, Wollstonecraft does not ask the essentialist question, "What is woman?" or the oppositional question, "What is woman's purpose in relation to man?" but rather asks "What is it like to be a woman given what society has made her?" Cugoano and Godwin ask parallel questions and come

to similar answers. All three writers first and foremost target the essentialist denial of moral capacity, or moral exclusion, as the foundational prejudice through which the social environment validates nonrecognition, domination, and disrespect. It stands to reason, then, that their first line of argumentation is the rejection of sexist, racist, or classist arguments that construct inferior collectivities from above through the wholesale denial of the moral capacity of those groups. But, in looking back and forth between the lived conditions of being a woman, a worker, or a slave and the prejudices and interconnected environmental conditions that enforce those lived conditions, all three authors inevitably, fluidly delve into injustice as maldistribution. They interrogate systemic denials of resources and goods, but they always attend to the victims' experiences of those systemic deprivations—"from victims' accounts of injustice we get the distinctive picture that what makes an injustice unbearable and unacceptable" is the exposure and exploitation of the victim's vulnerability to produce that victim's sense of disempowerment, degradation, and humiliation (Bufacchi 14).

Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin anticipate the work of Bufacchi by demonstrating how one form of social injustice always "feeds into" another form of injustice (11). Denigrating collective identities through manifestations of injustice as exclusion rationalizes subsequent denials of socioeconomic resources and opportunities for those same groups thus creating exploitable vulnerabilities. Furthermore, the denial of adequate resources creates inferiority that injustice as

exclusion normalizes to perpetuate inequality; it normalizes inequality through discourses of disrespect that excuse harmful deprivations and even violent behaviors toward the vulnerable. Bufacchi defines social injustice as maldistribution as "the improper or injurious distribution of the benefits and burdens that arise from social cooperation. An injustice occurs when the benefits and burdens are distributed according to criteria that not everyone (especially those who stand to receive less than others) could reasonably accept" (9-10). He goes on to list two key features of maldistributive injustice. First, he writes that maldistributive injustice can occur through formal institutions, like the law which protects rights for some groups and denies rights to other groups; and through informal daily interactions, for instance when parents allocate more money, food, or education to sons over daughters. Injustice as exclusion and maldistribution more subtly converge in the second, informal example, since daughters may be loved by their parents, but are nevertheless disesteemed to the degree that parents offer them fewer resources. Bufacchi cautions against equating all forms of social inequality to injustice. Inequality often creates vulnerability, but injustice has not occurred until the more powerful social actor exploits that vulnerability: for example, by claiming an unfair share of limited resources.

Second, the specific benefits or burdens, resources or responsibilities of maldistributive injustice can be "both natural and social" (10). Bufacchi attempts to subsume John Rawls's prolific work on redistributive justice, in which Rawls

defines resources as five kinds of "primary goods." These are resources that people need to have for a "complete life," and he ranks them by order of importance. Of primary importance are "the basic rights and liberties" of "freedom of thought and liberty of conscience" (*Justice as Fairness: A Restatement*, 57-58). The basic set of primary goods jointly preserves two kinds of moral capacities. The first of these is the individual's capacity to develop a "sense of justice," "to understand, apply, and act on … principles of justice" for her own good, for the greater social good, and for its own sake. Second is the individual's "capacity for a conception of the good," "to form, revise, and rationally pursue a rational plan of life" (Freeman 5). These liberties precede all others because of their moral foundation. All of them preserve each person's opportunity to first define for herself, and then pursue with agency, that which she decides constitutes a worthy life. For Rawls, the basic set of primary goods must be universal because it establishes the reasonable basis for social cooperation in the first place. For a society to be fair and just, all persons bound by the rules of that society require the opportunity to cultivate their moral capacities so as to improve from and invest in social cooperation. In other words, the basic failure of a society to support each person's moral development, including the chance to act on the dictates of conscience, undermines the justness of that society from its very foundation.

Rawls's remaining four categories of primary goods are rights and liberties that protect the integrity of the individual, such as "freedom of

association … freedom of movement, occupation, and choice of careers, and a right to personal property" as well as the equal right to political participation, access to "positions of authority," and social respect. Rawls emphasizes that social respect does not mean respect "toward oneself" but rather the "public recognition" of each person's moral capacity and right to moral empowerment, regardless of the incidents of birth status, natural endowment, or luck (Rawls 58, Freeman 4). Reasonable social cooperation refers to "reciprocity" and means that everyone needs to end up better off: "no one benefits at the expense of the poorest" social members (Freeman 7). Maldistributive injustice occurs when inequalities of primary goods unfairly advantage or disadvantage a person's "life prospects" so that one social member or group becomes "better off" to the increasing "detriment of the less well off." A just society means that social institutions and individual social members will not exaggerate inequalities of "native endowments," "initial social position," or "good or bad luck over the course of life" (Rawls *JF* 124). To correct this foreseeable injustice, Rawls establishes the "difference principle," in which he acknowledges that inequalities of wealth and income may exist, but posits that an ethical society founded on rational cooperation will intervene to redistribute resources for the overall betterment of the lowest social members. This is not wholesale egalitarianism, because the liberties of moral self-determination take precedence over redistribution of wealth.

Bufacchi founds his definition of injustice as maldistribution on Rawls's theory, but it is important to note a significant distinction between them. Bufacchi, Fraser, Amartya Sen, and Anthony Pogge would all agree that Rawls's encompassing theory does not emphasize the urgency of correcting life-threatening injustice. Even though Rawls grounds his work on eighteenth-century philosophers, like John Locke, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and Immanuel Kant, his work is in no way dependent upon the historical circumstances of this period. Rather, he revives facets of an earlier methodology to place his work in a longer historical conversation about ideal institutional justice. For example, his work assumes that the hypothetical subject would be a "free rational person" as well as politically equal. Neither of these foundations can be assumed for the groups my literary texts represent. These texts are already speaking to an unjust society because women, workers, and slaves already lack liberty, already lack the recognition of their moral capacity, already lack the opportunity to exert their moral will in the world, and already lack political enfranchisement or the means to achieve it. So, on the one hand, Rawls is invaluable as a guide for understanding the broadest long-term vision of my texts and for offering a map of the vast array of resources my writers target as necessary for a more just society.

On the other hand, his theory does not capture the sense of urgency characteristic in the work of Sen, Pogge, Bufacchi, Fraser and my primary texts. For example, while he certainly identifies wealth, income, and other natural

resources in his list of primary goods, these are secondary to his first principle of moral empowerment. For the other social justice scholars, however, natural resources often need to take immediate priority when their denial results in life-threatening deficits. Fraser defines three typical manifestations of resource deficits that she understands to be unjust under her rubric "the politics of redistribution." The first deficit is exploitation, which means "having the fruits of one's labor appropriated for the benefit of others." The second deficit is marginalization, or "being confined to undesirable or poorly paid work or being denied access to income-generating labor altogether." The last deficit is deprivation, or "being denied an adequate material standard of living" (7). Fraser's definitions align with Pogge's in that both locate maldistributive injustice predominately in economic structures. Accordingly, activists for redistribution would call for "economic restructuring," which could mean raising income, "reorganizing divisions of labor," or "democratizing the procedures by which investment decisions are made" (Fraser 6-7). Even as these definitions provide a concise starting point in contrast to Rawls's more encompassing theory, they are of limited use across my primary texts because none of the texts focus on solely economic concerns.

Despite the profound deficits suffered by women, workers, and slaves, none of my texts focuses on solely economic resources—not even Cugoano, who represents the most abjectly impoverished and violated collectivity. To be sure, all my writers agree that social justice can mean correcting systemic causes of

poverty to ensure all people have a fairer prospect to survive; but mere survival is not enough. Thriving as cooperative moral agents whose contributions are properly rewarded and equitably esteemed is also necessary. Therefore, I use all of these theories to define the parameters through which to read Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin. Fraser offers a way to understand how the writers address minimal standards of subsistence, while Rawls helps me recognize the more sweeping and long-term changes each writer envisions for a more just society. Finally, Thomas Pogge offers the most poignant account of the conditions of "radical inequality": the "worse-off" social members are abjectly and blatantly so; they are worse off than most, if not all, other social members. They are so abjectly exploited that it is nearly "impossible … to improve their lot." Their inequality pervasively affects "all aspects" of life and is avoidable, so that better-off social members can ameliorate the condition without becoming badly off themselves. Finally, the "better-off" have "no vivid idea of what it is like to live in that way" (*World Poverty and Human Rights, Second Edition*, 2002; 204). Pogge recognizes how radical inequality is in fact violence, and oftentimes violence of an arbitrary nature since "feasible institutional alternatives" and "feasible reforms" are likely available (205, 178). Akin to Rawls's difference principle, Pogge asserts the moral imperative of a just society to pursue reforms or institutional alternatives to ameliorate or eradicate radical and violent inequality.

Pogge's work intersects with Rawls since the imposition of such abject poverty and exploitation could never be agreed upon by reasonable people. My primary texts understand how women, workers, and slaves have all been denied the recognition and respect of their moral capacities, as innate capacity and as a right to cultivate this capacity. They therefore already implicitly protest unjust social arrangements to which women, workers, and slaves have not reasonably agreed. Even so, Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin identify additional goods, or social and natural resources, necessary for women, workers, or slaves to achieve a self-determined good life, or, at least, a life not predicated on violence. This chapter explores how each writer the resources each author targets for redistribution with the aim to improve the life prospects of the collectivities they represent. As stated in my introduction, the writers approach social justice from the ground up by examining the actual lives and prospects of oppressed peoples. They identify a multitude of resources that cover the full range of Rawls's categories of primary goods. I focus on the resources that seem most urgent and fully developed toward achieving each author's long-term vision. Amartya Sen stresses the importance of ending "manifest injustice," holding Rawls's "transcendental theory" as somewhat negligent for failing to meet urgent needs (7, 19). I situate my primary texts between these visions of justice. Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin protest manifest injustice, but do so with a longer view of transcending injustice for the wholesale benefit of all

social members. Most importantly, these texts work from the ground up, first citing injustices and then working toward solutions to those injustices.

Cugoano and Exploitation

In his book, *Moral Capital* (2006), Christopher Leslie Brown reevaluates the British abolitionist movement, retracing how a pre-parliamentary "antislavery sentiment" gradually built momentum into a full abolitionist campaign. Brown notes, "The morality of the slave system had troubled men and women for decades, but no one in Britain had attempted to overthrow it" (24). He asks how the seemingly sudden momentum came about and why it happened in the later decades of the eighteenth century. Most accounts of the abolitionist movement focus on the later generation of political, parliamentary advocates. But for Brown, this is the dénouement of a much longer history of "abolitionism," a term he uses to distinguish an earlier era of antislavery ideology foundational to the later, organized abolitionist movement. *Moral Capital* voices dissatisfaction with two split traditions in historical understandings of the abolitionist movement. On one side, scholars studying the later formal abolitionist movement offer too narrow a view; they "either fail to analyze or severely condense the problem of beginnings;" in studying the abolitionist movement only at the founding of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787, these researchers connect the success of the British abolitionist movement to economic decline in the British colonies coinciding with the rise of capitalism and free labor ideology

(18-21).[13] Meanwhile, another critical thread examines the roots of antislavery ideology at an earlier period, but falls into oversimplification and tautology, locating antislavery sentiment as "arising from climates of opinion" vaguely labeled as humanitarian discourses of "'the Enlightenment'" or of "'Evangelicalism.'"

Brown seeks to bridge this gap and especially hopes to bring the human element into view, to understand what events sparked antislavery sentiment into social action: "British mobilization would never have developed if particular individuals and groups had not conspired to create it." Without attempting to "lionize" the key figures of early abolitionism, he reexamines "familiar protagonists," like Anthony Benezet, Thomas Clarkson, Williams Dillwyn, Olaudah Equiano, Hannah More, Margaret Middleton, James Ramsay, Granville Sharp, Phillis Wheatley, and William Wilberforce. If none of these persons "began life as an abolitionist," then Brown asks what experiences led them to become abolitionists at a time when "abolishing any aspect of the slave system" could not have been "regarded as a plausible project" (21-25). Even though Brown briefly credits the insurrections of slaves themselves with influencing the eventual success of the British abolitionist movement, his concern is with how the early abolitionists encountered and responded to legalized violence against slaves. Thus, Brown locates moments of transformation for many of these key

[13] Critics such as Frank Joseph Klingberg, Sir Reginald Coupland, Dale H. Porter, Roger Anstey, C. Duncan Rice, and James Walvin

figures. For example, he writes that "Granville Sharp did not begin life as a humanitarian. The antics of slaveholders made him one" (93). One of those antics was slaveholder David Lisle's attempt to "reclaim" and ship to the Caribbean the brutalized slave, Jonathon Strong, after Lisle nearly beat Strong to death and indeed left him for dead on a London street. Brown reasons that it was not the brutality of the beating that influenced Sharp, since beatings of black and white servants alike were commonplace. Sharp was motivated, rather, by the peculiar legality that gave Lisle rights to assault, repossess, and remove his cast-off slave back to plantation slavery. For Sharp and many other early abolitionists, the problem was the apparent emergence and growth of slavery in England proper that propelled their work, more than antiracist or equal rights motives.

I introduce this section with Brown because he helps me articulate a couple of meaningful problems related to Cugoano and the place Afro-Britons occupy in historical interpretations of abolitionism. First, once again, Cugoano receives only brief mention in Brown's splendidly detailed, historically expansive, and often compassionate study. The few substantial essays on Cugoano, which I surveyed in my introduction, tend to view this writer in isolation, or place Cugoano in dialogue with other Black writers, isolating all of them from the larger abolitionist movement. *Thoughts and Sentiments*, published in 1787, falls just outside Brown's temporal parameter. But, although Brown includes some Afro-Britons in his work, Equiano and Wheatley likewise get

rather short attention. For Brown, like many scholars before him, the white abolitionists are rather viewed as benevolent patrons of Afro-Britons in England.

If "Black leaders like Equiano … emerged in London during the 1780s," then those Black spokespersons "took advantage of the emerging antislavery movement to claim a public voice for themselves." The antislavery campaign changed the lives of its Black participants, even as those participants influenced the campaign, "sometimes push[ing] the antislavery cause far beyond the aims of its British organizers" (296). Cugoano is one of those radical Black emancipationists. Part of what makes him so radical is his articulation of maldistributive injustice as a consolidation of the grossest forms of coercion, negligence, deprivation, violence, and exploitation onto the collective body of African slaves. The second aspect that makes Cugoano radical is his constant centering of the victim. In Chapter 2, Cugoano avoids the pitfalls of essentialist debates by redefining moral worth by behavior. However, when he addresses injustice as maldistribution, he emphasizes the experience of victims.

When reading *Thoughts and Sentiments* through the lens of injustice as maldistribution, readers might expect Cugoano to begin by articulating the deprivations of the basic needs of slaves. Cugoano certainly does so, but his work is no simple survey of deprivation. Perhaps, one reason for this is because Anthony Benezet had exposed the deprivations of slavery two decades before *Thoughts and Sentiments* in his treatise, *Some Historical Account of Guinea, Its Situation, Produce, and the General Disposition of Its Inhabitants. With an inquiry into*

the rise and progress of the slave trade, its nature, and lamentable effects. Also a republication of the sentiments of several authors of note on this interesting subject: particularly an extract of a treatise written by Granville Sharpe. By Anthony Benezet (1772). Quoting an even earlier, anonymous work on American slavery, Benezet exposes how "'The Negroes in our Colonies endure a slavery more compleat and attended with far worse circumstances than what any people in their condition suffer in any other part of the world, or have suffered in any other period of time'" (86). Next, Benezet supplements that general assessment with Thomas Jeffrey's more detailed account of slaves' "'misery'" and "'wretched'" "'condition'" of "'servitude,'" in which they are "'in a manner reduced to the condition of beasts of burden." Jeffrey describes the deprivations of subsistence in the form of food, clothing, and shelter along with the routine violence suffered by the enslaved:

> "In general a few roots, potatoes especially, are their food, and two rags, which neither screen them from the heat of the day, nor the extraordinary coolness of the night, all their covering; their sleep very short; their labour almost continual, they receive no wages, but have twenty lashes for the smallest fault." Benezet 87

Cugoano assumes his readers are already to some degree aware of these earlier accounts, but he places new emphasis on the degree of abjection, the frequency of violence, and the routine resistance of slaves themselves to move descriptions

of deprivation toward their more extreme form of exploitation predicated on violent acts of coercion.

First, he emphasizes coercion through his repeated motif of chains to bear witness to the particularly violent form chattel slavery takes. His first set of chain images occur at the beginning of the text, all coming in rapid succession as part of his personal narrative of capture. Through his childish eyes, he recounts, "I saw many of my countrymen chained two and two, some hand-cuffed, and some with their hands tied behind." Escorted by "treachery" and death threats, he arrives at the African coast to be forced aboard the slave ship: "But when the vessel arrived to conduct us away to the ship, it was a most horrible scene; there was nothing to be heard but the rattling of chains, smacking of whips, and the groans and cries of our fellow-men." Aboard the slave ship bound for the colonies on the Middle Passage, he exposes how "it was common for the dirty filthy sailors to take the African women and lie upon their bodies [while] the men were chained and pent up in holes" (14-15). These images come in the context of his own narrative of capture, a circumstance that made him both victim and witness to the entire "factory" system of enslavement that required constant guard, weaponry, trickery, confinement, rape, flogging, and innumerous, merciless acts of violence to subdue and secure unwilling, human cargo (12). Such images are fitting illustrations for an abolitionist text that protests the British slave trade and the entire international slave economy that spanned across the Atlantic. Cugoano places a renewed and extended emphasis

through his eyewitness account on the acts of "barbarity" of the slave trade, the slave ship itself, and, later, the systemized violence of plantation slavery. He also implies the culpability of the British reader who consumes and profits from the products of slavery.

Cugoano highlights slave resistance and the coercive nature of violence inflicted upon slaves. For example, he shows how the entire system of slavery is predated on coercion in the forms of kidnapping, entrapment, and death threats. In his personal narrative, he describes his childhood capture at knifepoint and gunpoint from which he and his companions, though mere children, attempted to flee: "Some of us attempted in vain to run away, but pistols and cutlasses were soon introduced, threatening, that if we offered to stir we should all lie dead on the spot" (13). He describes the attempted but failed shipboard mutiny during the Middle Passage: "when we found ourselves at last taken away, death was more preferable than life, and a plan was concerted amongst us, that we might burn and blow up the ship" (15). Cugoano asserts that "It is the duty of every man to deliver himself from rogues and villains if he can" (4). He argues that no law is binding if based on the non-consent, therefore all the laws on England that legalize slavery and attempt to govern it in the colonies are non-binding for the slave: "a man may lawfully defend himself, and endeavour to secure himself, and others, as far as he can, from injuries of every kind" (59). As Vincent Carretta explains, Cugoano "believes that slaves have not only the right but the obligation to rebel" (*Thoughts and Sentiments* xxi), and the author routinely shows slaves

trying to avoid, escape, or die before submitting to slavery. He thus wants to demonstrate how slavery is predicated on non-consent; it is non-cooperative social arrangement to which no enslaved person has ever consented, therefore it is unlawful in the eyes of God and by the laws of contracts to which proslavery writers so often refer. Coercion by definition nullifies the supposed contract of slavery because it operates through threat and force; it compels nonconsensual behavior in the forms of rape, forced reproduction, and compulsory labor; and, most importantly, it nullifies human will through restraint and domination. Brown suggests that even Granville Sharp may have been less motivated to abolitionism by his witness of violence than to the "antics" of slaveowners. He, like other Britons, may have been more tolerant of corporeal punishment.

Moreover, many Britons, perhaps partly disbelieving antislavery tracts, may have thought the corporeal punishment of slavery akin to that of local servants or even indentured servants in the colonies. Cugoano centers that violence to show the absolute abjection of slaves that is not just relatively comparable to other impoverished groups. Slaves are wholly dehumanized. Violence accomplishes the task, and slaveowners are well-studied in its effects. His childhood abduction and portrayal of the middle passage displays the brutality requisite to conquer a resistant people. Soon, in Grenada, "without any hope of deliverance," he observes how slavery consolidates deprivation, in the form of starvation; exploitation, in the form of forced labor; and yet more brutality, in the ruthless and regular beatings of starving slaves who dare to

chew the sugarcane which their own labor has produced: "For eating a piece of sugarcane, some were cruelly lashed, or struck over the face to knock their teeth out" (16). Other slaves have their teeth deliberately extracted as a systemic deterrent to others even before attempting to stave off their starvation. Cugoano recognizes how regular beatings result in concussed brain damage, for those who do not die from such frequent and merciless abuse, soon grow "stupid with many cruel beatings and lashings" combined with constant "hunger and hard labour" (16). The unadulterated, abject nature of slavery allows Cugoano to demonstrate several forms of maldistributive injustice within brief but dense illustrations. The slaves are not well-maintained, and, desperate from food deprivation, they risk extreme punishment or even death just for a taste of nourishment. This is not only deprivation, but the most extreme form of exploitation in that slaves are entitled to no share, not even a morsel, of the crop that is the fruit of their own labor— the sugar their hands produce and which British consumers take for granted on their tables. But most significantly for Cugoano is the calculated systemic dehumanization process observed here. The slave-traders and slave-owners well know the accumulative effects of psychological threat and direct violence on the enslaved, the power of brutality to stupefy, scare, sacrifice, and subdue unwilling victims through deliberate demonstrations of the master's unrestrained power and the victims unmitigated worthlessness.

To reflect that brutalizer's mentality and experience of abject victimization, Cugoano repeatedly draws upon a repeat motif of animal imagery and the hunt to show the total abjection of chattel slavery and persistent resistance of African people. Animal imagery demonstrates this author's profound understanding of how the absolute exploitation of chattel slavery is synonymous with total dehumanization. He thus anticipates the work of David Livingstone Smith in his book *Less Than Human: Why We Demean, Enslave, and Exterminate Others* (2011), in which Smith defines the connection between exploitation and dehumanization through extensive, comparative historical and cultural descriptive analyses. Smith asserts that, "although scholars from a wide range of disciplines are convinced that dehumanization plays a crucial role in war, genocide, and other forms of brutality, writings on the subject are shockingly thin on the ground." Smith focuses "on the dehumanization of Jews, sub-Saharan Africans, and Native Americans" because "the horrors" of their "persecution, enslavement, and destruction" have had "immense historical significance" that "in many respects are unparalleled" (6). Dehumanization, predicated upon defining groups as less than human, as lacking some essential attribute necessary to qualify as such, serves a psychologically distancing function which Smith calls a "rhetoric of enmity," in which war, murder, rape, and torture are morally and psychologically sanctioned and even encouraged (Smith 103). The mentality of enmity enables the brutalizer to violently exploit his victim from a socially-sanctioned attitude. Smith's work intersects with

Bufacchi, Fraser, and Rawls who all maintain the interconnected nature of injustice, in which the lack of human recognition, moral exclusion, and social disrespect all feed into the socioeconomic exploitive practices of social injustice as maldistribution. The difference for Smith, and the reason I include him here, is his level of specificity in identifying how propagandistic animalistic language helps create that social and psychological enmity for the most horrific degrees of exploitation, such as war, genocide, and slavery.

For example, Nazis "labeled Jews as *Untermenschen* ("subhuman") because they were convinced that, although Jews looked every bit as human as the average Aryan, this was a façade and that, concealed behind it, Jews were really filthy, parasitic vermin … They were regarded as insidiously subhuman. Their ostensible humanity was, at best, only skin deep" (5). Just as Jews were maligned in World War II Nazi propaganda films, so were the Native American and African peoples subjected to genocide and slavery from the sixteenth century and onward throughout the eighteenth-century, and with remarkably similar slurs across the European nations that engaged in colonialism and slavery. During the first phase of European colonialism, the Spanish debated the human status of Native Americans, with Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda arguing for the forceful enslavement or slaughter of Native Americans based on the claim that they were "'by nature, uncivilized, barbarian and inhuman;'" they were more "'like beasts'" than persons (77). Englishmen did no better, with Captain John Smith calling the Powhatan Indians "'cruell beasts' with 'a more unnatural

brutishness than beasts;'" with Samuel Purchas's popular travel books in England informing the reading public that Indians only had the shape of a human but were actually even more debased than the creatures they hunted to eat; and with Wait Winthrop supporting extermination of the Narragansett Indians as "'flies,'" "'rats," "'mice,'" and "'swarms of lice'" (Smith 81-82). Therefore, modern chattel slavery ought to be understood as a scant step from a more direct state of war in that forced servitude takes priority over genocide—but only so long as the slave can be made useful.

Indeed, Cugoano's succinct account of the violence aboard the slave ship already details the ways in which, as Smith also observes, African slaves were considered "human beasts," "recruited to work alongside oxen and donkeys, or in the case of many captive women, to satisfy the victors' sexual urges." Cugoano's description of guns, knives, whips, chains, beatings, lashings, and tooth extractions reflect the ways slaves endured the same disciplinary modes of control as domestic animals, such as "'whipping, chaining, branding, castration, cropping ears'" (Smith 107). But Cugoano returns to these images again and again, uncompromisingly and unprecedentedly. At times, he confesses near speechlessness at the horror he has seen: "To give any just conception of the barbarous traffic carried on at those factories, it would be out of my power to describe the miserable situation of the poor exiled Africans, which by the craft of wicked men daily become their prey" (Cugoano 73). He does not refrain from trying.

His is among few Black eyewitness accounts of the slave system, and he persistently stresses the violence and the trauma of that structure, the cruelty of the social agent who inflicts harm and the reprehensible consequences of that injury to victims. In a later extended passage in which he reiterates the systemized "factories" of slavery, each sentence he constructs pairs the "inhuman" actor and the dehumanized victim. For example, he points to the "treacherous, perfidious and cruel methods made use of" by European slavers on African soil, which "are horrible and shocking" to unsuspecting African men, women, and children. Next, he documents the combined physical pain and psychological shame of "subjecting [Africans] to brutal examinations stripped naked and markings" as he simultaneously calls attention to the "barbarous and base" abuser. In the very next sentence, he confronts "the unfeeling monsters of Captains" responsible for "stowing" Africans "in the holds of the ships like goods of burden, with closeness and stench" (74). Arrived in the colonies, African people "are again stripped naked for the brutal examination of their purchasers to view them, which, to many, must add shame and grief to their other woe, as may be evidently seen with sorrow, melancholy and despair marked upon their countenances" (74). He never allows the reader to ignore the social actor, the criminally "vicious" European; he comprehends the systemic manner in which physical and psychological brutality serve exploitative purposes, to stupefy victims into submission. For the enslaved, social disrespect takes on the singular meaning of unqualified abjection predicated on studied,

systemic violence from the moment of capture until the moment of death. Cugoano's consolidated interrogation of injustice as maldistribution and dehumanization coincides with Pogge's work on radical inequality. *Thoughts and Sentiments* illustrates through vivid animalistic imagery and scenes of violence the abject conditions of slavery that those "better-off" readers have no "no vivid idea of what it is like to live" amidst.

Cugoano, like Smith, uncovers how the radical inequality of slavery is so wholly absolute that the slave's life is only of value so long as he is exploitable for labor: "But our lives are accounted of no value, we are hunted after as the prey in the desart, and doomed to destruction as the beasts that perish" (85-86). Slaveholders claim that plantation slaves suffer no worse than "the poor in Great-Britain and Ireland labour under," but Cugoano avows that "the poorest in England would not change their situation for that of slaves" (19). "No freeman," he continues, "would resign his liberty for that of a slave, in the situation of a horse or a dog." No poor but free laborer, however difficult his circumstance, has so little human value as to be "bought and sold" "like animals." The employers of poor laborers or servants in England may beat their inferiors, but they may not exert unremitting violence as do the "capricious owners" of slaves, whose "torturing and tearing [slaves] to pieces, and wearing them out with hard labour" is legally sanctioned. Moreover, "should the death of a slave ensue by some other more violent way than that which is commonly the death of thousands, and tens of thousands in the end, the haughty tyrant, in that case, has

only to pay a small fine for the murder and death of his slave" (19-20). Cugoano rejects any argument that likens slavery to typical British servitude or day labor; he likewise rejects proslavery arguments that accuse other nations of worse atrocities; and he indicts such arguments as symptomatic of exactly that "rhetoric of enmity" that Smith describes. Cugoano voices his utter shock, indeed repugnance, at the backwards audacity of defenses for slavery based on worse or worst degrees of hardship, destitution, and degrees of viciousness: "An equal degree of enormity found in one place, cannot justify crimes of as great or greater enormity committed in another" (21). If any worse condition could be found than modern chattel slavery, then this should only motivate its total and immediate abolition. But the mark of proslavery degeneracy is its backward logic, or "strange perversion of reason," that justifies evil with evil (29).

Cugoano may seem to run the risk of resurrecting violent colonial propaganda, but his relentless use of animal and hunting imagery is a calculated risk to harness the language of disrespect to make visible its sinister power to generate incalculable acts of real violence. Recurrent use of animal and hunting metaphors reflects onto the British public its own culpability in even passively benefiting from criminally coercive slavery. In addition to these frequent images of abject misery, Cugoano lists the many other acts of unjust coercion, such as theft, kidnapping, human trafficking, "robbery and murder," that manufacture the most criminal enterprise of all, the "involuntary servitude" of "slavery" (86). Even though he earlier asserts the intellectual and rational capacity of Africans,

his jeremiad emphasizes maldistributive injustice in the most extreme forms of deadly violence and deadly exploitation; he thus frames European colonialism, imperialism, and systemic slavery as legally criminal and spiritually wicked. Cugoano does not always distinguish between the active proponents and passive beneficiaries of slavery, nor does he limit his outlook to single nations as offering better or worse forms of enslavement. From the African perspective, all "the inhabitants of Europe" have colluded to "grievously injure" Africans. The "blood of millions," "the groans and cries of the murdered" "cry out against them" and "cry for justice" (21, 49).

Thoughts and Sentiments deploys animal imagery to reflect the radical inequality of slavery predicated on dehumanizing violence, serving exploitative intentions for the benefit of the European, and always placing Africans in the "worse off," indeed worst possible state of existence. Slavery is not just marginalization, it is life-threatening forced labor; it is not just exploitation, it is life-threatening theft; it is not just deprivation, it is life-threatening poverty; it is not just dehumanization, it is often death. The author declaims proslavery postures of humanity, "it is not the intention of those who bring them away to make them better by it; nor is the design of slave-holders of any other intention, but that they may serve them as a kind of engines and beasts of burden" (23). Here Cugoano refers to that familiar paternalistic pretense of the proslavery position in which slave traders claimed it their civilizing mission to rescue Blacks from poverty, ignorance, and heathenism in Africa. The slaveholder took a pose

of paternalistic benevolence, claiming custodial guardianship of childlike and "grateful slaves" (George Boulukos, *The Grateful Slave*, 1). Cugoano seeks to counteract this rising discourse of paternalism in his sustained debunking of proslavery rhetoric and radical supplementation of antislavery arguments by drawing on the language of rights and liberties, portraying abject poverty, displaying exploitation that dehumanizes, and demonstrating how all of these violations defy international civility through global conspiracy against many sovereign peoples.

My understanding of Cugoano's rhetoric of international civility intersects with Sandiford's assertion that "Cugoano seems to take as his basic assumption the view that a love of liberty and a desire to extend those benefits to one's fellows without discrimination should be an indispensable rule of conduct for an enlightened, civilized people" (105). Cugoano exhibits the African's love of liberty in three key ways. First, he directly states this as fact, that Africans have a profound, deeply held value of liberty as much as any British citizen. Second, he exhibits the African's love of liberty through those lamentable images of Africans rather choosing to die than relinquish freedom. Third, he displays it implicitly through the language of the hunt, in which fleeing Africans, striving for freedom and liberty, run from their pursuing captors. Sandiford surmises that Cugoano could not reconcile pretenses of European enlightenment and progress with the economic system of slavery. Indeed, figuring Africans as hunted simultaneously figures the European as "unjust" "ruffians and barbarians," as "thieves and

vagabonds," as "pirates, thieves, and robbers," and as "persecutors and murderers" (Cugoano 3, 10, 19, 90).

Slavery is an unjust institution because it betrays all the values of moral, fair, and equitable social cooperation, any single condition of which qualifies as maldistributive injustice. Predicated on corporeal violence, psychological intimidation, murder, and abduction, its manifold coercive foundations oppose any notion of social cooperation, moral choice, or rational self-determination. Even more specifically, slavery violates the rights and liberties of "freedom of association," "freedom of movement, occupation, and right to personal property." Slaves have no freedom of association, forcibly removed from their communities, homelands, religions, families, and nations. They have no freedom of movement, kidnapped, held at gunpoint and by death threats, enchained, whipped, confined in pens, sold like animals, and slaughtered. They have no choice of occupation save unpaid labor or death. Slavery, in fact, consolidates all the forms of economic injustice detailed by Fraser, since the fruits of the slave's labor always serves another's benefit (exploitation); since the slave is denied income-generating labor altogether in the most undesirable of occupations (marginalization); and since the starved, naked, and homeless slave is denied an adequate standard of living, or a life at all (deprivation). They have no personal property, since they have no claim to a single product of their own labor, not the millions of pounds of sugarcane or tobacco they produce; nor even parental rights, as "fathers, mothers, and children … have been barbarously tore away

from" each other and "their native shore" (74). Africans have been robbed of their homeland and properties there, of their families and communities, and of themselves: "but they take a man himself, and subject him to their service and bondage, which is a greater robbery, and a greater crime, than taking away any property from men whatsoever" (71). Jeffrey Gunn narrowly classifies many of these crimes as forms of theft, but I demonstrate how Cugoano in fact covers an expansive range of rights and liberties to expose the "perfidious and cruel methods" of slavery that violate all notions of "moral rectitude, justice, equity and righteousness," all the core values of just social cooperation (43). As Cugoano says it best, no man, woman, or child would choose "a state of a degree equal to that of a cow or a horse" (23).

Manifold maldistributive injustice runs "contrary to all the genuine principles of Christianity," "contrary to the natural liberties of men," and "contrary to that which is good" (24, 35, 40). Images that figure the European participant in slavery as a thief, criminal, pirate, or murderer point to his "willful" hypocrisy "contrary to all the boasted accomplishments" of Enlightened, civilized, Christian Europe (49). Cugoano castigates direct participants and indirect beneficiaries of an economic system predicated on conspiracy, non-consent, and brutality: "if you give it a sanction by your passive obedience, it manifests that you have gone over to those brutish enemies of mankind, and can in no way be a true lover of your king and country" (95). He makes slavery an issue of civic interest and patriotism. In *A Representation of the*

Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery; or of Admitting the Least Claim of Private Property in the Persons of Men, in England (1769), Sharp examines the legality of slavery within England proper under British law and condemns the institution of slavery as immoral according to Christian precepts: "Slavery is destructive of *morality* and *charity*, and cannot therefore be *consistent* with the Christian religion; because it gives worldly minded men a power to deprive their Slaves of instruction and spiritual improvement, by continually oppressing them with labour" (162). For Sharp, slavery is illegal in England, unchristian for its moral incapacitation of the dispossessed, and corruptive through its unequal power relation between master and slave. Cugoano agrees with Sharp, and he illustrates that abject inequality and corrupted nature of enslavers through the sustained motif of animals and images of violence. Slavery is a consolidated form of socioeconomic maldistribution, and it is an international moral-spiritual disaster. Active and passive supporters of slavery willfully betray the "irreversible and universal" "laws of civility" founded in Genesis (54, 90). The law of nation ought to reflect the "law of God" (55). The ultimate crime of slavery is its inversion of the law of God that forbids coercion, robbery, and murder; man-made laws sanction an economic system in betrayal of divine commandments. Biblical law requires restitution for these betrayals: death to covetous thieves and death to murderers. Slaves are within their rights to demand this restitution.

And not just slaves; millions of Africans and other Native peoples across the globe have suffered acts of violence tantamount to war and calculated genocide. Unprecedentedly, Cugoano extends the concept of law from one of national interest to one of expansive international genocide when he links the shared histories and experiences of violence between African and Native American victims of the European colonial enterprise. Proslavery rhetoric bases its benevolent mythos on the civilizing mission, in its moving groups of people away from geographical locations already characterizes by a scarcity of resources and goods to locations in which those groups would gain access to more resources, goods, and opportunities. Proslavery rhetoric, therefore, creates a myth of its own redistributive justice. It looks to the supposed lack of educational, governmental, judicial, religious, and moral systems of Africans, as it did in earlier centuries regarding Native Americans, as rational explanation for invasion, colonialism, and slavery. Citing these various socioeconomic resources, moreover, suggests a definition of sovereign nationhood based on geographical boundaries, government systems, and even the moral foundations and customs of community. Eighteenth-century thought associates all of these systems with civil society and moral individuals. In turn, the moral citizen is the foundation of the moral nation.

In debunking proslavery rhetoric, Cugoano locates his cry for justice within these complex associations. He condemns the entire British nation alongside all European invaders of other sovereign nations, such as those many

African nations and all the Native peoples stretching across the Americans, Asia, and India. He indicts entire government systems and rulers: "Wherefore, if kings and nations, or any men that dealeth unjustly with their fellow-creatures, to ensnare them, to enslave them, and to oppress them … when they have the power to prevent it … can it ever be thought that God be well pleased with them?" (85). Slave traders as well as the plantation owners claiming British nationality, directly affect and reflect upon the entire moral character of their nation. Moreover, Cugoano radically asserts that the active and passive beneficiaries of slavery are equally culpable for national evils. But what is the extent of those evils? Cugoano connects the national histories of Britain, Spain, and the other "Christian Nations," to demonstrate a shared European history of colonial genocide and apartheid: "an hundred thousand" Africans killed annually in the slave trade, "hundreds of thousands" more held in bondage, "eleven million" slaughtered Native Americans, and "twelve million" starved and oppressed "in Asia" (68, 90). Cugoano exhibits a shared empathy with all of the colonized peoples of European imperialism; he rightly recognizes the global "business" in "bloodshed;" and he thus reveals the international conspiracy of "the West" which only arbitrarily recognizes civic nationhood (75-76).

Imperial fantasies of economic, sexual, and social liberty for Europeans manifest as exploitation, rape, and bondage of Asian, Native American, and African peoples. No native peoples have ever been "made better" by these actions, and the criminal depravity rampant in European brutality suggests they

have been made no morally better either (Cugoano 23). But it appears that these crimes also penetrate Britain too. In the same year that *Thoughts and Sentiments* was published, another British abolitionist, Thomas Clarkson, was nearly assassinated for similar anti-slavery efforts; this event suggests the tremendous risk of radical abolitionist work and points to the accuracy of Cugoano's moral indictment against its participants. *Thoughts and Sentiments* employs a mode of inversion to deconstruct European colonial and racial myths. And through the narrative of forced migration, animal imagery, and portraits of violence, Cugoano tries to educate the largely ignorant British public about the invisible crime of slavery, its supporting institutions, and the manifold forms of maldistributive injustice founded on violence and dehumanization. He furthermore rejects notions of amelioration, demands immediate and "total abolition," and calls for "universal emancipation … of all the Black People" (91). He even suggests legislation to impose penalties against slave ships and military deployment to stop further slave traffic. Cugoano's forced migration to the British colonies and Britain both subjugates him and empowers him as a transatlantic witness to the global conspiracy of the West. To an unprecedented degree, he recognizes the many structures of an international slave economy, and his sophisticated deployment of scripture and rationality is a radical demonstration of subaltern cultural appropriation against social injustice.

Wollstonecraft and Deprivation

If Amartya Sen rips a page out of Wollstonecraft's *Rights of Woman*, then the theme of that page is the balance between rights and duties, or what he calls "deontological demands" (Sen 19). When Wollstonecraft discusses women's entrapment by limited choices, especially regarding chastity, she makes a deontological argument. Chastity serves as an illustration for the way Wollstonecraft understands injustice as exclusion to be interwoven with injustice as maldistribution. In my previous chapter, I claimed that a dark situational irony informs *Rights of Woman*. My emphasis there was on Wollstonecraft's articulation of the deleterious consequences of the sexual double standard for women's identities in terms of their daily lives, meaning the range of harms they come to at one extreme, in contrast to the best they can accomplish at the other extreme. For women to survive and to receive any modicum of social respect, they must either be chaste or maintain the perfect reputation of chastity in order to make an advantageous marriage. Otherwise, they fall into absolute ruin. At best, the unchaste woman suffers total social alienation; at worst, she dies; most likely both. Thus, Wollstonecraft argues that the sexual double standard, with its life-threatening stakes for women's chastity (but not men's), may indeed achieve a seemingly moral consequence in curtailing "intemperance" (216). However, the dire consequences of being unchaste mean that women have no fair choice at all. Chastity becomes an unfair burden of social cooperation because it is a non-negotiable duty unevenly applied across social members. More importantly for

Wollstonecraft, it means women have no liberty to become moral agents through the exercise of their reason. Women cannot be authentic moral agents unless they can set their intentions to good and accomplish that good to fruition. This theme of choice is the predominant feature of Wollstonecraft's work and, like Rawls, her principle subject is moral empowerment.

Chapter 2 examined how Wollstonecraft understands identity as a social construct that discursively and systemically denies woman her capacity for moral conscience and human agency. Wollstonecraft measures identity through the emotional, psychological, and spiritual consequences arising from limited moral development and agency as those limitations affect women in day-to-day ways, even as she always understands those limitations as arbitrarily imposed rather than essential aspects of feminine identity. Her frequently practical focus demonstrates how lived experience cannot be separated from the social environment. But as my inclusion of Rawls above should suggest, moral incapacitation carries special relevance within a framework of social injustice as maldistribution as much as it does for social injustice as exclusion. If moral exclusion denies the moral worthiness of particularized identities and excuses unfair behavior towards those identities, then this disregard often manifests itself as the maldistribution of social resources and economic goods, cumulatively resulting in fewer life options for collectivities who have been subjugated based on the initial disrespect of their identity.

Wollstonecraft always concerns herself with the practical feasibility of her interventions for social reform. Her outcry against injustice as maldistribution most closely follows the top-down aspect of her analysis. She makes this aspect of her strategy clear when she opens the treatise by presenting her long-term vision for social reform, which is indeed her widest sweeping demand for woman's full enfranchisement as equal citizens. She intersperses throughout *Rights of Woman* additional passages that project her vision of women's more complete lives. For instance, she imagines the strong and dignified widow with access to respectable work who can provide the bread for her children should her husband die without leaving financial provision. She imagines women choosing love matches in marriage and working as professional doctors and in positions of state. Always a hopeful and long-term visionary, Wollstonecraft never seems quite so farsighted as in her first contention for the full rights of citizenship, with all that full enfranchisement would entail—access to social resources and economic goods largely and often wholly denied to women in this period.

Framing her smaller visions within this larger, long-term goal of full political enfranchisement is in fact one of the strengths of Wollstonecraft's top-down mode of analysis when scrutinizing the distribution of resources. She articulates her long-term vision, but imagines the smaller, strategic gains in education and professionalization as the incremental steps by which women could achieve full citizenship one way or another. One way would be the immediate granting of full citizenship by those who govern, such as Talleyrand

in France, to whom she dedicates the treatise, even while criticizing his intention to perpetuate the disenfranchisement of French women. She has no illusions that immediate and full citizenship is likely for French or British women. She is visionary but realistic. Therefore, her smaller hopes for women must be read as a second route to full citizenship that begins with practical and incremental steps strategically aimed to gradually improve the condition of women one by one. She envisions how educational improvements could help women gain moral agency and a sense of justice. A modicum of financial independence in the world of work or property ownership could empower women to survive outside of specifically sexually defined roles like marriage or prostitution. Through moral and financial empowerment, Wollstonecraft imagines women as, eventually, developing a collective agency by which to demand full rights and liberties as citizens from the bottom up.

Wollstonecraft's sweeping vision is full moral citizenship for women and all that citizenship entails. She frames *Rights of Woman* within this demand in her opening dedication to Talleyrand in which she protests the statesman's support for the French constitution of 1791 that planned to totally disenfranchise French women from the rights and liberties of citizenship. She asks him to reconsider denying women the rights of citizenship; to reconsider endorsing Rousseau's subservient view of women; and to reconsider designating women to strictly domestic education and reproductive functions. She then advances her overarching vision. Women must attain "knowledge and virtue" through

"education" to become "patriots" who have a vested interest in the moral welfare of society:

> And how can woman be expected to co-operate unless she know why she ought to be virtuous? unless freedom strengthen her reason till she comprehend her duty, and see in what manner it is connected with her real good? 66
>
> . . .
>
> Consider, I address you as a legislator, whether, when men contend for their freedom, and to be allowed to judge for themselves respecting their own happiness, it be not inconsistent and unjust to subjugate women, even though you firmly believe that you are acting in the manner best calculated to promote their happiness? Who made man the exclusive judge, if woman partake with him the gift of reason? 67

She emphasizes that she is "[c]ontending for the rights of woman," that "truth must be common to all," and it can "only be produced by considering the moral and civil interest in mankind" (66). Her argument closely aligns with Rawls' first principle, first set of primary goods, and the necessary moral foundations of a just society. Like him, she highlights the themes of liberty and freedom, moral empowerment and education, and reciprocal social cooperation and patriotism. For women to choose responsible and ethical duties, they must first develop their moral capacities. "Truth," meaning moral truth and sense of justice, must be universally accessible to all social members; without this fundamental right and

liberty of conscience, all other duties are invalid, because women start off in society as already systemically worse off to the degree that they have no conception of the good, the just, or the means to achieve that moral agency. Thus, for this writer, moral conscience and the pursuit of it is often synonymous with what constitutes a good and complete life.

Wollstonecraft incorporates into her views on the necessary rights of citizenship the Smithian model of moral development and balance between self-interest, civic engagement, and spiritual improvement. Personhood is made up of a series of ethical choices in which the moral agent must always negotiate between promoting her own dignity and well-being, contributing to the progress of civilization through emotional and behavioral integrity, and enhancing the overall progress of civilization through empathic interactions with others. Duties that require the sacrifice of an individual's moral dignity can never be just, because such sacrifices under the pretense of duty undermine the necessary moral foundation that founds a just society on the dignity of the individual. In practical terms, women's lives can be neither just nor good unless they have the moral judgment by which to determine those standards for themselves. The denial of education effectively denies woman her path to a spiritual understanding of herself—a practical ability to choose the most ethical path in life each day—and disengages her from those higher motives of civic investment. Wollstonecraft again interrogates Talleyrand: "Sir, you will not assert, that a duty can be binding which is not founded on reason?" (67). Her references to

cooperation and patriotism founded on reason point to the Rawlsian idea of rational reciprocity as the basis of just social cooperation. Without moral empowerment, woman cannot cultivate those necessary, socially stabilizing motives of kinship and fellowship that stem from within her own conscience and which bind society through sympathetic relations with others. Without moral empowerment, all social arrangements are, by definition, unjustly exploitive because they have not been entered into from that free and equal starting point. Without moral empowerment, women are not ethically bound to a society that does not improve their condition.

One of the remarkable features of Wollstonecraft's methodology is the way she sustains a theme across multiple paradigms. For example, she recurrently traces the notion of consent and its converse, coercion, across microcosmic interpersonal incidents to macrocosmic global contexts. In one of two allusions to Samuel Richardson's eighteenth-century masterpiece, the novel *Clarissa*, Wollstonecraft rejects dishonor by rape: "When Richardson makes Clarissa tell Lovelace that he had robbed her of her honor, he must have had strange notions of honor and virtue. For, miserable beyond all names of misery is the condition of a being, who could be degraded without its own consent!" (143). "Miserable" in this context does not mean sad; rather, it means abject. The author anticipates Pogge in her description of women as utterly and blatantly abject relative to men, and in the absolute terms of preferring death to dishonor (204).

She again addresses the way culture reduces a woman's moral worth to her body: "Nay, the honour of a woman is not made even to depend on her will" (143). Again like Pogge, Wollstonecraft describes here the condition of woman as unable to improve her lot: her inequality is unavoidable. Counter to cultural norm, Wollstonecraft argues that moral worth for both sexes is a spiritual and intellectual ethic dependent on the subject's self-determination. Without moral empowerment, there is neither good nor evil. Her deontological ethic of moral agency stretches across her conversations on citizenship and bodily rape to show how the unavoidable "radical inequality" established at the largest institutional level of government authorizes daily acts of coercion, even violence, at the most debasing interpersonal level. Nonrecognition of women as persons capable of moral development and worthy of fair regard feeds into injustice as maldistribution by enforcing woman's state of degradation through complete disenfranchisement at every level of her existence; as Pogge phrases it, their inequality pervasively affects "all aspects" of life. Even her sexual non-consent is disregarded to the extent that bodily rape only justifies her further economic abjection and social alienation. That many or most women, like Clarissa, internalize the violence done to their bodies as dishonor upon their moral worth and socioeconomic value as objects of marriageability points to the complete alienation of woman from that foundational first principle that pairs self-worth with a sense of justice, both tied to socioeconomic survival.

Thus, Wollstonecraft often links the state of womanhood to that of slavery to make visible the injustice of "radical inequality," which she calls "unnatural distinctions:" "They may be convenient slaves, but slavery will have its constant effect, degrading the master and the abject dependent" (221, 67). Woman is like the slave who has never consented and would never consent to such miserable, servile, and unreasonable social arrangements that damage her development and prevent her from even recognizing the wrongness of her own victimization. That most educated men, like the novelist Richardson, hold the same distorted view of woman's honor points to the fallacy of patriarchal dogma that obscures coercion with the same posture of paternalistic benevolence that excuses chattel slavery. In an echo of the slavery metaphor, Wollstonecraft questions, "Besides, if women be educated for dependence; that is, to act according to the will of another fallible being, and submit, right or wrong, to power, where are we to stop?" (115). Here she addresses the paternalistic for-your-own-good argument that man governs woman to improve her condition. Oh, really? "Fallible" and "power" are the words to attend to. Still on the theme of consent and coercion, Wollstonecraft shifts her gaze from woman to man, from brutalized to brutalizer, to re-examine man's moral agency. Given his profoundly greater array of life options and power, has man behaved ethically and morally toward woman? If man has undercut woman's most fundamental right to cultivate her understanding, then what might this slippery slope also lead him to deny to her and to other groups like colonial slaves? As it happens, he has already refused additional natural and

social resources to keep her ever more "under the yoke" (92). If Wollstonecraft sometimes appears to shift moral blame onto men, it is because they have the liberties and choices that women do not, but they have routinely exploited, deprived, and marginalized women and other collectivities.

Wollstonecraft appeals to larger historical and political contexts in her rhetorical questions to Talleyrand. In fact, she rightly sifts through the trappings of genre to connect how a seemingly entertaining novel like *Clarissa* disperses injurious viewpoints no less harmful than Talleyrand's direct political influence. Men establish unjust societies founded on unfair systems that rely on innumerable acts of coercion and which are initially predicated on two forms of moral exception. Firstly, men exempt themselves from reasonable accountability; secondly, they do so by suppressing women as legitimate recipients of justice and legitimate advisors for justice. Addressing Talleyrand, Wollstonecraft quotes his own political writing on the rights and liberties of man back to him: "'With one half the human race excluded by the other from all participation in government, [is] a political phenomenon that, according to abstract principles, it [is] impossible to explain'" (66). Wollstonecraft resituates Talleyrand's words in the context of her treatise on women's rights. In so doing, these words take on new meaning to astutely connect how injustice as exclusion and injustice as maldistribution against women are both predicated on the moral exclusion of women and the moral exemption of men.

It is this consistent exclusion and maldistributive denials that demands explanation. She appeals to Talleyrand's supposed conviction of men's right to "freedom" to "judge for themselves respecting their own happiness" to expose his "perverted" reasoning that supports the complete overthrow of the ancien régime but disallows women basic rights and liberties by incongruously appealing to the traditional patriarchal regime (155). Wollstonecraft evokes a notion of justice founded on defensible and reasonable arguments when she demands rational accountability: "If the abstract rights of man will bear discussion and explanation, those of woman, by a parity of reasoning, will not shrink from the same test: though a different opinion prevails in this country, built on the very arguments which you use to justify the oppression of woman—prescription" (67). Traditional wrongs cannot vindicate perpetual wrongs. Talleyrand's patriarchal viewpoint and paternalistic rationalization makes him as irrational and tyrannical as the absolute monarchy he helped to dismantle. Wollstonecraft draws on the language of political revolution to evoke the possibility of an eventual feminine revolution.

Wollstonecraft often speaks in philosophical and political diction. Just as often, though, she presents injustice as maldistribution as the denial of rights and liberties in practical and experiential illustrations that carry the reader from the earliest formative years of girlhood to the later state of womanhood. The socialization of woman calculatingly "warps her understanding" and weakens her body by preventing her from accessing the intellectual resources and

physical freedom available to men in the eighteenth century and which the body and mind require for "coherent" strength (Sapiro 69). Education as schooling is itself a socioeconomic resource, but the faculties it could produce, mental and physical strength, are of principal (and principle) value for *The Rights of Woman,* since it is only through strength of mind and body that women can achieve independence as both moral and socioeconomic agents. As Sapiro observes, Wollstonecraft rejects the belief in "the radical dichotomy between mind and body that Enlightenment and liberal thinkers are often credited with fostering" (68). Sapiro also observes how "Wollstonecraft often cautioned that children must exercise their minds and bodies to make both strong" (69). Sapiro makes these observations in the context of Wollstonecraft's rejection of feminine sensibility, but I resituate Wollstonecraft's value of strength as part of the author's extended dialogue on rights and liberties. Strength of body and mind are fundamental rights for the basic functionality of the individual unto herself, for her greater socioeconomic independence to work and act in the world for her own best interest, and to gauge the motives of others who may not have her best interests at heart.

Education as schooling is itself a socioeconomic resource, but the faculties it produces, moral conscience and sense of justice, are of principal (and principle) value for *The Rights of Woman*. Wollstonecraft frames the denial of rights and liberties by their concrete methods and results. For instance, her bidirectional gaze bonds Rousseau and Talleyrand as conspirators. Talleyrand intended to

adopt Rousseau's educational model; therefore, the education and socialization processes planned for girls have profound political implications for women.

Should French or British girls receive any education at all, the educative process already coincides with Rousseau's and Talleyrand's misguided, misogynistic notions to occlude woman's cultivation of conscience (which includes moral reason and a sense of justice) as well as bodily strength, which should be the first and necessary foundation of a reciprocally cooperative and just society. I return to Wollstonecraft's deconstruction of Rousseau to draw out how each feature she criticizes in fact corresponds to a specific kind of right and liberty, or primary good, listed by Rawls. For example, a young woman instructed and confined at home is blocked from freedom of association, which would, according to the Smithian model, contribute to the development of reason. She is barred from the experience of schooling that would expand the young person's social environment to include not just formal requirements inside a classroom, but also the ordinary dialogues and debates that arise in educative environments between peers and learning cohorts. Upbringing and education likewise deny the girl freedom of movement and freedom of conscience. She is constantly under watch and trained to restrain her physical and mental energies. In experiential terms, the young woman's confinement inside the home and even inside of restrictive clothing during this period prevents her development of basic physical strength that could empower her to fend off bodily attack, to work for her own bread, to enjoy unpolluted fresh air,

to appreciate the natural environment on solitary rambles, or to simply contribute to a healthful constitution. The young lady, mandated to silently obey her parents and governess within the confines of the home, primarily reads books that reinforce these behavioral expectations—too often sentimental novels, occasionally literature to educate her on domestic management, and almost never those more expansive texts of theological, philosophical, or economic debate. These would expose her to larger public dialogues on rights and ethics and empower her to internalize a sense of self-worth through the development of her higher-level faculty of reason, which would allow her to internalize a sense of justice through engagement with intellectually rigorousness debates on ethics. All this would result in her empowerment to judge and reject unreasonable duties and demands and the defilement of body and mind.

When Wollstonecraft calls women slaves or perpetual children, it is because the rights and liberties denied to girls at their earliest phases of life continue to be denied to women at all stages of life. As girls, they are already disenfranchised as moral agents by weakened constitutions and by the narrowness of their social connections. As women, their socioeconomic deprivation encompasses ever more incapacitation relative to their male counterparts. For example, unlike men, women can exert no direct political influence, since they cannot occupy positions of authority. Women of all ranks lack freedom of occupation or choice of careers. Women of the lower orders "are made to work beyond their strength" (137); women of the middle and upper

classes have no occupations except reproductive functions within marriage and needlework: "yet, this employment contracts their faculties more than any other that could have been chosen for them" (147). Single women, wives, and widows have no recourse for dignified survival outside marriage: "Who can recount the misery, which many unfortunate beings, whose minds and bodies are equally weak, suffer in such situations— unable to work, and ashamed to beg?" (136). Indeed, socialization nullifies the girl's moral agency, just as the law nullifies woman as if she does not legally exist at all: "The laws respecting woman, which I meant to discuss in a future part, make an absurd unit of a man and his wife; and then, by the easy transition of only considering him as responsible, she is reduced to a mere cypher" (226). Wollstonecraft once again encapsulates how injustice as exclusion in the form of nonrecognition transitions into injustice as maldistribution. This passage refers to the legal status of the married Englishwoman under the laws of coverture, which nullified her moral responsibility and legal identity and rendered her unable to own property, retain earnings, or instigate lawsuits for her own interests. Sir William Blackstone, in his treatise, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, paternalistically reasons that marriage functions as a protective and honorable state for the female: "These are the chief legal effects of marriage during the coverture; upon which we may observe, that even the disabilities, which the wife lies under, are for the most part intended for her protection and benefit. So great a favorite is the female sex of the laws of England (Book I: Chapter 15: Of Husband and Wife).

Blackstone employs the term "disability" in the narrow sense of "legal disqualification" to refer to how the law constructs collectivities who are debarred from the fuller range of legal and social privileges otherwise available to wholly enfranchised persons (OED). He appears to concede that the law of coverture impedes women in his subtle phrasing, "for the most part." He offers a concluding analogy later in his analysis of marriage law in his section entitled, "Of Husband and Wife," that likens the station of the wife to the same as that of a child or servant. Since husbands bore all responsibility for the actions of their wives, except in cases of "treason or murder," they in fact held greater authority over wives than they did over their children or servants; husbands retained the rights to "moderate correction" and restraint "of her liberty" to control a wife's conduct. The word "disability" may not be straightforwardly misogynistic, but its legal application reflects paternalistic prejudice built into law that weakened or erased the wife's individual autonomy under the guise of greater good to her. Marriage nullifies the adult woman as a moral agent by making the husband the only responsible party for all her actions; this cannot be for her benefit since it reinforces her lack of basic right to moral agency.

In fact, deprivation of one form feeds into a multitude of additional kinds of exploitation. Marriage is woman's only path to socioeconomic survival and social respect, whereas men of at least middling rank have relatively many options by which to pursue economic self-determination and the social respect in that self-guided pursuit of a good life:

In the middle rank of life, to continue the comparison, men, in their youth,

> are prepared for professions, and marriage is not considered as the grand feature in their lives, whilst women, on the contrary, have no other scheme to sharpen their faculties. 129

Marriage encapsulates economic deprivation, marginalization, and exploitation. It perpetuates woman's deprivation of moral agency, it economically marginalizes her by confining her to limited career options without income or property of her own, and it exploits her all of her property transfers to her husband; property takes on a particularly sexual form, moreover, because the main fruit of her labor within marriage, children, are also considered the property of her husband. Her morality, social standing, earnings, property, even her children are all primary goods transferred from wife to husband, to the disadvantage of her "life prospects" but to the greater and disproportionate advantage to his.

Indeed, Wollstonecraft understands these numerous forms of maldistribution as accumulatively producing a collectivity of women who are socioeconomically and morally radically unequal to men by design. She also figures inequality in terms of violence, drawing on metaphors of slavery and animals to convey the state of unsafety and fear women suffer through deprivation. For example, she recognizes man's initial social disrespect that fuels woman's socioeconomic deprivation when she writes, "How grossly do they insult us who thus advise us only to render ourselves gentle, domestic brutes!"

(84). Men not only systemically deprive woman of resources and goods, but they attempt to coerce her into depriving herself as well.

Just as Cugoano recognizes how systemic and routine forms of violence damages the brain and the human spirit, so does Wollstonecraft identify how confinement and violence produces learned helplessness:

> Considering the length of time that women have been dependent, is it surprising that some of them hug their chains, and fawn like the spaniel? 'These dogs,' observes a naturalist, 'at first kept their ears erect; but custom has superseded nature, and a token of fear is becoming a beauty.'
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> 155

Wollstonecraft returns to her castigation of Rousseau who "declares that a woman 'should never, for a moment, feel herself independent … that she should be governed by fear' (91). For Wollstonecraft, a life predicated on forced dependency and predicated on fear is tantamount to sexual slavery: woman is "made a coquettish slave in order to render her a more alluring object of desire, a sweeter companion to man, whenever he chooses to relax himself" (91). Woman's socioeconomic vulnerability coupled with the inculcation of constant fear parallels the condition of slavery for Wollstonecraft. Slavery itself is synonymous with an inhumane, animal existence, but, like Cugoano, Wollstonecraft also employs animal imagery to attend to dehumanization caused through systemic deprivation, fear, and coercion. For women, coerced duties are always of a sexual nature. Sexual slavery, like chattel slavery, is a form of radical

inequality predicated on violence and non-consensual, "degrading" forms of labor for "the abject dependent" (67). Without moral conscience, self-determination, and economic independence of any sort, woman is like "a blind horse in a mill, is defrauded of her just reward; for the wages due to her are the caresses of her husband; and women who have so few resources in themselves, do not very patiently bear this privation of a natural right" (137). This passage perhaps reflects Wollstonecraft at her most ironic, for it comes in the context of the chaste and dutiful wife, who does everything within her human agency to fulfill her ascribed role. Nonetheless, her husband dishonors her by transferring her "rewards," which only amount to affection, to others. The dutiful wife has no non-sexual occupation.

Wollstonecraft consistently comprehends maldistributive injustice as the integrated and coercive relationship between many forms of disenfranchisement, from political disenfranchisement to the denial of all rights and liberties at every stage and level of female existence. She frames some forms of disenfranchisement in altogether practical terms such as in the liberty of movement, from physical exercise, to sexual autonomy including the right to say 'no,' to the physical strength to engage in work should that be necessary for her survival. Some forms of disenfranchisement are more abstract such as in the right to social respect, from the opportunity to cultivate internal self-worth and self-protective motives, to the fair regard within marriage and familial relationships, to the just respect from society at large. The right to freedom of

association also takes on a broad meaning. For example, Wollstonecraft identifies an act of injustice when girls are blocked from an expanding world of peer friendships and learning cohorts, or when women are denied access to fully inclusive religious and political affiliations, and when the condition of marriage, rather than expanding her familial and kinship connections, rather relegates woman to an ever more isolated private sphere of the home as her husband's desires are expected to define and fulfill the whole of her existence even at the expense of adequate attention to childrearing. Knowledge, law, opportunity, and material resources are all obstructed from women under the suspect rationale of paternalistic defenses. Just like enslavers claim that bondage will result in eventual improvement, so does the father, husband, brother, and guardian of woman. Wollstonecraft reads misused patriarchal power as gross social mismanagement that utilizes formal and informal institutions to undercut female freedom of thought and conscious and blockades her liberty to pursue a complete and moral life. *Rights of Woman* thus correlates the coercive act of bodily rape as inherently violent to the individual woman to coercive denials of rights and liberties as inherently violent to most women to the coercive act of total political disenfranchisement as inherently violent to the body of women collectively. While Wollstonecraft demands enfranchisement for women, she is none too optimistic for its near fruition, "who can tell, how many generations may be necessary to give vigour to the virtue and talents of the freed posterity of abject slaves?" (148). Systemic deprivation will require generations to overcome.

Godwin and Marginalization

Social injustice as maldistribution is an unacknowledged value of the most influential scholarly work on *Caleb Williams*, vaguely suggested when Kelly connects Godwin's theme of "persecution" to characters' assertions of "rights."[14] Falkland, "the sophisticated, polished, and gallant gentleman obsessed with the purity of his honor," represents the disintegrating remnants of feudalism and a code of "chivalry" as "the most important bond between rich and poor, strong and weak" (193-194).[15] Tyrrel, meanwhile, symbolizes a more local, British political force harking back to the Glorious Revolution; he is no less ambiguous as both "the rebellious spirit of the middle-class squirearchy," "the independent country gentleman," who at once "resisted the king" but "oppressed the peasant class" in the name of political and property "rights" (205-207).[16] Ultimately, Falkland and Tyrrel, despite their seeming ideological differences, in fact collude in maintaining control of the socioeconomic resources needed by subjugated

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[14] Unlike earlier scholarship, Kelly does not read *Caleb Williams* as merely a one-to-one allegory with Godwin's political treatise.

[15] Kelly argues that Godwin does not subscribe to the violence and complete destruction "down to the whole fabric" of society that had already become of the French Revolution by the time Godwin writes *Caleb Williams* (195). He reads Caleb's transgressive surveillance of Falkland as representative of the moderate supporter of the Revolution who questioned noble entitlement, whose intentions may have been reformative, but who was equally responsibility for sparking violence.

[16] Kelly's articulation of a multi-layered political allegory in fact conflates different realms of social justice. His references to notions of truth and intolerance echo the foci of the politics of recognition in which persons are oppressed based on their perceived worth or lack thereof, with the novel offering corrective "truth" to affirm otherwise maligned subjectivities. Meanwhile, Kelly's observations about liberty and civil strife more correctly fall under the rubric of the maldistribution—of rights and opportunities—that motivated the English Civil War, the American Revolution, the French Revolution, and the Haitian Revolution. And, finally, the problems of "corruption" and "persecution" link revolutionary motives since social injustice in any of its guises is always about hostile exploitation that revolutionaries sought to redress.

characters for survival. Both Falkland and Tyrrel occupy positons of socioeconomic superiority and unjustly wield their power over rights and resources against disempowered characters in corresponding ways despite each of their claims to civilized ethics, like paternalistic benevolence and protectiveness, toward their inferiors. Falkland and Tyrrel enforce the imposing, paternalistic rights of rank and privilege as empowered men of property which Godwin distinguishes from the modest rights and liberties asserted by the collection of humble characters in the novel.[17]

In this section, I attend to the claims made by disempowered characters who make altogether humbler assertions of their rights to basic sustenance, to freedom of movement, to pursue safe livelihoods, to preserve their families, to protect the sanctity of their persons and minds, and to follow the dictates of their consciences toward that which they believe to be a moral pursuit of a good life, or liberty.[18] The true theme of injustice as maldistribution only emerges by attending to the recurrent pattern of suffering and failure across the

[17] If Kelly sees a relationship to French Revolution politics, then this is because similar socioeconomic shifts took place in England and France, changes wrought by parallel developments in the power of the mercantile classes furnished by the wealth of similar imperial projects. Kelly rightly frames Tyrrel as nouveau riche, but places the symbolic importance too far back historically to the Glorious Revolution. Tyrrel is too established and confident as a landowner and too similar an adherent to the paternalistic value system implicit in Falkland's "chivalric code," which is in fact a vein of social paternalism, to belong to that earlier period (Kelly 193).

[18] Kelly's interpretation is undeniably important for understanding the novel as engaged in exposing political and socioeconomic "corruption" (Kelly 200-201). However, he is less attendant upon the specific resources that empowered characters wield and never examines the how the number of disempowered characters relate to each other. For example, Kelly's assertion that Caleb symbolizes the French émigrés who were equally culpable for the violence of the French Revolution omits from consideration the theme of injustice (as maldistribution) as it extends across all of the lower-class characters in the novel in systemic ways and through the abuses of power by both Falkland and Tyrell.

disempowered characters of the novel. These disempowered characters range from the disenfranchised woman of the gentry, to the displaced semi-independent yeoman, to the exiled domestic servant and the outcast criminal gang member. These diverse figures cut across gender, social, and economic strata, but nevertheless suffer the same problems of injustice as maldistribution by being denied valuable, but comparatively basic, resources that the Falklands and Tyrrels of Godwin's imagined world presume as theirs to control by right of rank, wealth, and sex and under paternalistic doctrine and the related patronage system.

These humble figures depend upon local landowners for survival and opportunity within the traditional paternalistic patronage system that assumes an altruistically reciprocal, if unequal, arrangement between social superiors and their subordinates. Men of property are ideally, if hypothetically, bound by an ethic of benevolent condescension toward their inferiors; meanwhile subordinates are required to obey the dictates of their benefactors as intended for their own best interest and in the wider interest of social stability. As Thomas William Heyck explains in *The People of the British Isles: A New History*, "The central features of social relationships were closely related to property: *patronage* and *deference*. Property enabled a person to disburse patronage—gifts, jobs, appointments, contracts, favors—and the ability to act as a patron was the crucial measure of property and status" (*Volume 2*, 52). "Patronage," "condescension," and "deference" are similar terms that describe how supposedly generous and

judicious persons of wealth and status help those of lesser rank and affluence. But benevolent charity, while civil and even seemingly coincident with Rawls' difference principle, in fact reinforces the social hierarchy through the visible display of resource control: the resource may be offered, but not the sustained right to it. Cooperation within the paternalistic system places the greater burden upon the social inferior who becomes obligated to defer his own self-determination and moral conscience to his superior for survival.

Caleb Williams retraces this theme through multiple narratives of oppression. As already seen in Chapter Two, Caleb Williams, our main protagonist, suffers unrelenting persecution by Falkland. In this chapter, I concentrate on Godwin's other subjugated characters, Emily and the Hawkinses, who have never received sustained treatment in Godwin scholarship. Like Caleb, Emily insists on following the dictates of her conscience. Godwin's theme of moral conscience centers on Emily's sexual autonomy and which is governed by her internal sense of modesty when she refuses to wed and bed a man who repulses her mentally and physically. Ultimately, her resistance results in her death as Tyrrel, her cousin and guardian, exerts his socioeconomic and patriarchal rights over her self-determination. He deprives her of liberty, economic support, and conspires to dishonor her by rape (perhaps Godwin's critique of *Clarissa*). She risks death, indeed does die, fighting for her liberty and morality. Similarly, Godwin displays the socioeconomic resources that Tyrrel and all the neighboring squires of the English village use to their benefit to

render the humble man ever more worse off. Hawkins is that hard-working, honest, humble man. He, like Caleb, desires no wealth or fame, but he does insist on bettering himself and preserving his son from servitude. Godwin suggests a moral theme here as well, since Hawkins desires his son pursue the ministry, a dignified position not so much due to social status as much as centered on the preservation and cultivation of communal moral ethics.

The powerful determine the opportunities available in the private lives and professional livelihoods of subordinates under the patronage system by which they control all political, proprietary, and professional arenas: "the ability to act as a patron was the crucial measure of property and status;" but for social inferiors, their very "means of survival and advancement" often depended upon their betters regardless of their intelligence, work ethic, skill, or talent since they had few protections by way of labor laws and no legitimate or lawful political voice (Porter 110; Heyck 51). As Roy Porter expresses, "The geography of social relationships was as imposing and established as the hills [. . .] Subjects were set into the social strata [. . .] by their personal connections with others, especially authority figures: fathers, masters, husbands, parsons, patrons" (*English Society in the Eighteenth Century, 2nd Edition*, 1990; 21). Without a "welfare state" or "social services" for the poor, the lower orders "depended on skills in the games of deference and condescension, patronage and favour, protection and obedience" (Porter web). From government offices and clerical appointments to tenancies, apprenticeships, and domestic service posts, almost all livelihoods are

distributed by patronage. In turn, extending patronage earns the benefactor "deference, which includes postures of gratitude, loyalty, service and obedience" (Heyck 52).

The relationship between patron and dependent is figured reciprocally. The patron and paternalist maintains political and economic privilege, but he also assumes the burdens of ethical leadership, altruism, economic stability, and moral direction for each of his dependents and as his national duty of citizenship. In exchange for the patron's burden of responsible leadership, the rules of deference presume the obedience and consent of dependents as the patron's right. This assumed right to deference does not inform strictly professional relationships. Financial and social relationships, including marriages, assume moral and intellectual superiority accompany the material advantages of king over subject, landowner over tenant, master over servant, husband over wife, and parent over child. Inferiors owe deference to the socioeconomically and sexually advantaged in all of these hierarchal relationships.

Godwin repeatedly juxtaposes paternalistic speech with violent action to interrogate the false assumption of material-to-moral superiority, the radically unequal patronage-deference socioeconomic institution, and the paternalistic belief system that philosophically endorses it. The tribulations of Emily Melvile reveals the link between sexual and socioeconomic cruelty. Meanwhile, the parallel misfortune of the Hawkinses exposes the conspiracy between men of

wealth against their subordinates. I concentrate on the experiences of Emily Melvile and the Hawkinses because no sustained study of their parallel mortifications has ever been published. Their stories, however, supply the key to understanding by comparative extension the subjection of Caleb. I believe that Godwin's professed intention to affect the common, unphilosophical reader of eighteenth-century novels resonates most profoundly through these figures. Through them, Godwin poses challenges to those humble readers who may identify with the unfortunate subjects of this novel, the farmer, servant, or dependent gentlewoman, who also may be routinely coerced into unjust forms of deference and obedience against the dictates of their own hearts and moral consciences for the sake of survival.

Emily Melvile is a pathetic, fateful, and astonishingly admirable character who has received only occasional and fleeting mention in Godwin scholarship. However, it is through the figure of Emily that Godwin exposes how patriarchalism is a specific manifestation of the broader paternalist disposition. Patriarchalism specifically refers to gendered inequalities, but it is paternalistic in the eighteenth century because it rests upon the same precepts of radical inequality, dependency, duty to obey, and authoritarian control glossed over as benevolence, condescension, and fatherly protectiveness. Godwin introduces his chapter on Emily's plight within the context of Tyrrel's "domestic tyranny:" "The vices of Tyrrel . . . were peculiarly exercised upon his domestics and dependents" (Wollstonecraft 258, Godwin 48). This opening sentence immediately codes for

the reader the vulnerability of Tyrrel's subordinates who are subject to his capricious household rule. The immediate attention drawn to Tyrrel's cruelty to members of his household foreshadows Emily's eventual destruction since she is wholly dependent upon her cousin, Tyrrel, for her survival.

Godwin juxtaposes the grudging "benevolence" of the Tyrrels against Emily's guileless and unpretentious tenderness to draw out the exploitative probabilities underlying social paternalism. Emily is already the unfortunate victim of familial discord; she is Tyrrel's orphaned cousin whose ostracized and deceased mother married for love over family dictates and who died financially destitute and abandoned (48-49). Godwin characterizes Emily much like Caleb, as naturally gentle and inquisitive, as receiving rather by default a substantial if "casual" education, as unaffected by false refinement, and as reliant upon her intrinsic "stores of a just understanding" (50).

The family displays little appropriate filial love for the amiable, cheerful, fearless, "good-natured and disinterested," young woman, permitting Emily entrance into the home "into a sort of amphibious situation, neither precisely that of a domestic, nor yet marked with the treatment that might seem due to one of the family" (51, 49). Yet the family "conceives" their dubious adoption of Emily as "the most exalted act of benevolence," even if they fail to consider her due the "portion" of her mother's withheld dowry or even a small yearly income upon the death of Tyrrel's own mother (49). Sheltering the destitute girl from harm and providing basic needs of food and clothing is the extent of their benevolent

generosity and filial sympathy. Their apparent magnanimity extends strictly to room and board, even if the "gloomy," "savage," and "ferocious" Tyrrel "felt a kind of paternal interest in her welfare" and eventually comes to depend on "his good-natured cousin" for "superficial" amusements like "dancing and music" and her limitless emotional comfort (50-51). From his perspective as her patron, these small comforts are her duty to perform in exchange for the shelter and sustenance that he provides.

Emily has every enduring, modest, and agreeable feminine attribute of the ideal, eighteenth-century wife except beauty and money; this is Godwin's irony here in that Emily is altogether moral and good but of no exploitable value on the marriage market. Godwin's portrait of Emily and her circumstances is delicately satirical and sexually candid in his characterization of her personality, her person, and her impoverished existence. While she does not initially feel the want of her poverty, she is also too young and ignorant to understand the financial "portion" that "In equity perhaps she was entitled … and which had gone to swell the property of the male representative" (48). While she epitomizes the internal attributes of the dutiful wife and receives an education that would amply prepare her for a career as a wife and mother, she lacks the external attractions of physical beauty and wealth that would tempt an appropriate partner of similar social rank to marry her. In fact, the family wholly neglects to provide her with any sort of dowry or income with which she could attract a husband or maintain an independent living. While she is no sexual temptation

to her cousin because of her smallpox scars, she fulfills all the companionable domestic duties of a wife as a docile, domestic comfort to Tyrrel and "mediator" between his rage and other members of the household (50). In character, she is admirably rich; in position, she is abjectly poor.

Godwin candidly, if through negation, refers to the potential of Tyrrel "to look upon" his cousin and ward "with the eyes of desire" to suggest the intimately connected social, sexual, and financial vulnerabilities suffered by women within the familial context in which men and women occupy radically unequal standing. His phrasing, "Emily's want of physical beauty prevented him," suggests that, had she been beautiful, Tyrrel may indeed have coerced sexual obedience and compliance from his cousin as one of the deferential duties expected of the female dependent. Godwin's deliberate word choices, such as in "swell the property of the male representative," "playful arts," "debauched by applause," and "savage protector," embed by connotation the potential carnal motives of male relatives for their consanguineous dependents (50-51). Godwin thus turns a critical lens upon the family, contrasting the ideal of family and home as woman's safe-haven to the social reality that familial inequalities create conditions under which a woman's survival depends upon blind obedience even against the dictates of her own conscience. Presumed and enforced sexual inequality combined with paternalistic demands of feminine deference threaten female safety and destabilize the supposed sanctity of the family as a protected

domestic sphere free of the corruption and competition of professional and political arenas.

Unequal familial relationships pose extreme threat to the moral development, sexual security, and economic survival of women. Tyrrel's ruthless and calculated project of sexual brutality and financial humiliation against Emily makes these coordinated moral, sexual, and financial threats to female dependents shockingly explicit. First, Tyrrel's failure to provide a modest dowry blockades Emily's opportunity for marriage or an independent living outside of his home. As an impoverished woman of the gentry, much like biographer Elizabeth Robins Pennell notes of Mary Wollstonecraft, Emily at once lacks the training to survive by her own labor and the physical capacity for the strenuous labor of lower-class domestic work. The lack of financial provision is just one means by which Tyrrel controls both her sexuality in terms of marriageability and liberty in terms of earning her own living by the fruits of her own labor. But this degree of financial and sexual control is wholly within the socioeconomic purview of eighteenth-century familial paternalism.
Tyrrel's hitherto implicit and "savage" sexual jealousy takes a decidedly sadistic turn when conjoined to his hatred of Falkland and enacted upon the psyche and body of Emily. Seventeen-year-old Emily unwittingly and unconsciously falls in love with Falkland: she is "transported whenever he was present," he becomes "the perpetual subject of her reveries and dreams," and her "artless love" becomes the "fervent" rhapsody of "fairy-land and enchantment" after Falkland

rescues her from burning to death in a village fire (51). She experiences these effusions of fancy for Falkland, but she is entirely unaware of their romantic significance. Falkland deeply pities Emily's "unprovided and destitute situation;" he judges her lack of provision as dishonorable to the benevolent reputation of the Tyrrels, a view informed by his internalized dictates of paternalistic moral responsibility. Falkland's sympathy is one of condescending compassion rather than conjugal love. His own fineness of feeling and sexual decorum regulate his polite distance from Emily. But a certain worldliness also governs Falkland's prudence as he deliberately maintains distance to avoid arousing the repressed sexual jealousy of Tyrrel. His worldly insight foretells the collapse of Emily's girlish fairy-tale dreams into delirious deathbed nightmares through Tyrrel's "oppression of despotism" (58).

Ultimately, her socioeconomic disadvantage becomes Tyrrel's opportunity to enforce his paternalistic rights over Emily in specifically legal, economic, and sexually coercive forms. His manifold oppression negotiates the dictates of custom and legality while also obscuring his motives of sexual and emotional jealousy. Emily's adoration of Falkland nauseates Tyrrel to the point of "rancorous abhorrence" and he becomes "determined to wreak upon her a signal revenge" (57). Tyrrel enacts his revenge upon Emily through imprisonment in the home, incarceration in the county jail via a bizarre lawsuit for restitution of his lifelong support, and through a peculiarly sadistic attempted rape. Tyrrel cannot simply evict her to the "wide world" without ruining his own illusory

reputation as an altruistic man of property. Therefore, he contrives to "impose" upon her the "mortification and punishment" of marriage to a man "in all respects diametrically reverse of Mr Falkland," to an "uncouth and half-civilised animal;" in other words, Tyrrel projects his own lust onto a degrading choice of marital partner who resembles himself in coarseness if not in social status (58).

Forced marriage to a man who Emily finds inhumanly repulsive lays bare Tyrrel's incestuous tendency and sexual sadism nurtured by the socioeconomic inequality that placates and rewards vice easily glossed over as paternalistic privilege. He relishes the "shame" she will suffer at the hands of the crude Grimes: "You must be taken down, miss. You must be taught the difference between high flown notions and realities" (59). The "high flown notions" alluded to here are Emily's belief in her right to choose an appropriate marital partner, a likeable partner her equal and complement in disposition. Emily resiliently refuses to defer to Tyrrel's demands. She asserts the dictates of her conscience, heart, and body in refusing to marry a man who repels her. This passage also ironically refers to her naïve disbelief in her cousin's depravity; she cannot comprehend that he would actually enforce his revolting intentions. Mrs. Jakeman, Emily's surrogate mother, "constant adviser," and Tyrrel's housekeeper, by contrast, "saw the whole in a very different light from that which Emily had conceived it" (59). Godwin again guides his reader's interpretation of these narrative crises through the understanding of the wiser character. Mrs. Jakeman understands that "Nobody ought" enforce his

corrupted will upon his dependent, but "wicked and tyrannical men" routinely "persecute" members of their own family (59, 62).

Mr. Tyrrel thus takes sadistic pleasure in facilitating his mediated rape of Emily through the abuse of his power if not the use of his own body. Godwin displays several instances of rape through Emily's experiences. The most literal of these occurs when Tyrrel commands Grimes, his intended husband for Emily, to abduct and sexually assault the young woman in order to force the marriage. Grimes fails, but the incident draws out the connection between sexual, social, and familial maldistributive disempowerment. Emily may not suffer the physical rape, but she does suffer the violation of her sense of safety in familial fidelity. Had the rape transpired, she would also have suffered social rape of lost reputation and psychological rape of being obliged to marry her abuser. Social rape and psychological rape are perhaps more obvious in the customary, accepted legality of Tyrrel's paternalistic right to assert his sexual will, economic privilege, and legal power over his dependent's internal moral dictates. Emily's own sense of "just understanding" motivates her more modest claims of rights and liberties. Emily asserts her right to freedom from coerced sexual relations, the liberty of moral purity and physical chastity, and the implicit liberty to determine the path to her own contentment.

The eviction of his ward and removal of financial support is not socially sanctioned; in the eyes of the world, the deliberate casting out of his dependent is an intolerable act of cruelty. However, Tyrrel's control of her person through his

sordid choice of marital partner is socially and legally sanctioned under the pretense of paternalism and the related rules of patronage and deference. Tyrrel claims injury to his patronage in the following speech addressed to Emily, "You, whom we took up out of charity, the chance-born brat of a stolen marriage! you, must turn upon your benefactor, and wound me in the point where of all others I could least bear it" (64). This passage reveals the grotesquely limitless nature of the rules of deference and obedience. Tyrrel calls his aunt's love-marriage a "stolen marriage." Her self-determination in choice of sexual partner robs the paternalistic family of its socioeconomic maneuvering through marital and material alliance. Choosing love over money and self over authoritarian decree violates paternalistic authority that cannot comprehend the female's desire for self-determination over her own body and future. Paternalistic authoritarianism presumes the female dependent's will as always subject to masculine direction and desire. The most psychologically disturbing and damaging dynamic here is that paternalistic presumption mandates 'self-rape' by demanding the sexual and socioeconomic victim collude in her own coercion through the forceful subjugation of her moral conscience. Godwin demonstrates how paternalistic authority within the radically unequal structure of the institutions of family and marriage is a legally sanctioned form of mediated rape in physical, psychological, and moral effect.

These violations are instances of injustice as maldistribution. Most straightforwardly, Tyrrel controls Emily's access to food, water, shelter, and

economic opportunity (even if limited to marriage for most eighteenth-century women). His methodical sexual terror displaces her from what should be the safety of home, and his bizarre suit for financial restitution misplaces her into the county jail where she dies of fever. He unjustly deprives her of all the most basic human needs of sustenance, shelter, safety, and life. The female dependent lacks self-determination over her body, lacks the freedom of mobility to leave her home at will, owns none of the fruits of her labor (not even her own children), and has no recourse for an independent livelihood. Tyrrel as archetypal paternalist controls his dependent's corporeal survival utterly, and he does so with deliberation. Godwin wants readers to understand Tyrrel's maldistributive injustice as calculated physical torture and psychological terror. For the scant rewards of sustenance, shelter, and survival, and with no rewards of liberal rights or moral freedoms, the woman under guardianship of relatives or husbands routinely suffers the unreasonable burdens of the legalized rape of her body and the ceaseless violation of her self-worth by the deferential suspension of her will and moral autonomy.

Emily's experiences are not isolated; they are neither isolated in the context of the novel nor as representations of actual social realities. Readers witness a similar pattern of deprivation and terror in the Hawkins subplot. For this story, Godwin shifts his focus from the dynamics of paternalism within the private sphere of the family to the dynamics of paternalism within the public sphere of professions: "This Hawkins had originally been taken up by Mr Tyrrel

with a view of protecting him from the arbitrary proceedings of a neighbouring squire, though he had now in his turn become an object of persecution to Mr Tyrrel himself" (36). This passage is the author's opening sentence to the Hawkins tale. It directs readers to mistrust Tyrrel and sympathize with the beleaguered existence of the English tenant farmer. In compressed composition, Godwin immediately establishes a pattern of "persecution" suffered by Hawkins at the hands of two squires—"the neighboring squire" and "Mr Tyrrel himself." Next, Godwin emphasizes the precariousness of the patronage system that governs the landowner-tenant arrangement. The word "arbitrary" is a highly suggestive one in eighteenth-century political writing that connotes unpredictable, unfair, and unbridled violations by authority. The word "protecting" alludes to the paternalistic ethical responsibility of the superior to safeguard and nurture his subordinate. Lastly, Godwin's sentence structure, literally and syntactically, places Hawkins as "object," objectified by the more powerful and unjust social actors who hold his livelihood and very life in their grasp. Whatever opportunity Tyrrel offers, he soon retracts; Hawkins's refuge here is as fleeting as it was with the neighboring landowner. In a single opening sentence, Godwin has painted a portrait of the fearful existence of the English tenant farmer concurrently precarious and entrapped.

No fewer than four squires persecute Hawkins. The first of these is Squire Underwood, who is the "neighboring squire" alluded to above. He has evicted Hawkins from tenancy because the farmer refused to vote in a local

election as Squire Underwood "mandates." Hawkins is a tenant farmer, but he is also the owner of "a small freehold estate inherited from his father" (36). He is a very modest landowner in his own right. This property ownership gives him the right to vote in "the county elections." However, the gentry expect by customary deference the small man of property to vote as "required by his landlord." Hawkins "refused to obey the mandate, and soon after received notice to quit the farm he at that time rented" from Underwood (36). From the squire's perspective, Hawkins has betrayed the burden of deference to which his better presumes his due. His is a breach of the decorum of deference, but not a violation of the law. Just as Emily was mandated to disobey the dictates of her conscience within a private and sexual circumstance, Hawkins is mandated to forgo his legal right to vote and to betray his own independent moral judgment. Nevertheless, his breach of custom justifies Underwood's severing their professional relationship which endangers the modest livelihood of Hawkins and his family. Underwood casts off his dependent tenants and paternalistic tenets easily.

The second squire who threatens the survival of Hawkins is the very same political candidate for which he refuses to vote, Squire Marlow. Hawkins explains his rationale for withholding his vote to Tyrrel: the squire's "huntsman" "three or four times" "rode over my fence, and so through my best field of standing corn" and ruined the mature "crops." Hawkins complains to Squire Marlow, who subsequently "threatened to horsewhip me" (36-37). The

huntsman violates land laws in jumping the fence and hunting on property not belonging to his own employer, tramples upon the subsistence of the farmer and his family, robs them and their landlord of crop-share payment, and then the squire unjustly threatens bodily harm when Hawkins claims injury. The initial crop damage by the huntsman occurs in the name of his employer even if it is more a circumstance of negligence than premeditated harm. The huntsman is a parallel figure to Gines who enforces the surveillance and capture of Caleb upon Falkland's bidding; both figures are the dirty-doers of their masters' evil biddings, the visible hands that enforce suppression through negligence, laziness, or deliberateness; and they are backed by the less visible but truer sources of unsympathetic domination. Hawkins uses an eighteenth-century idiom to describe the "woundy passion" of the violent Squire Marlow, which means "excessive and extreme" (36, 354). The farmer's claims to rights—his legal right to an autonomous vote and the sanctity of his fruitful labor in crop—meet with extreme violence. The powerful squires value customary deference over the word of the law, and they routinely use violence to enforce their control in defiance of the law. In so doing, they violate the paternalist values of altruistic, moral, and socially cooperative patronage.

The third oppressive squire is Tyrrel himself. Despite Tyrrel's admiration for Hawkins, he turns against the farmer for a similar act of moderate defiance. Just as the planter maintained his legal right to vote, he also maintains his liberal privilege of opportunity to assist his son to a more respectable profession. Tyrrel

esteems Hawkins for his work ethic and frankness; the farmer quickly becomes a promoted and "favoured dependent;" and Tyrrel then offers Hawkins's eldest son a job in "service" as "whipper-in to his hounds," or huntsman's assistant (38). Hawkins declines Tyrrel's offer with internal "mortification" but outward respect and "apology:" "I am main sorry to displease your worship, and I know very well that you can do me a great deal of mischief. But I hope you will not be so hard hearted, as to ruin a father only for being fond of his child" (39-40). The farmer speaks respectfully, aware of Tyrrel's power over him, and staunchly resists the downwardly mobile job offer. Hawkins intends his son become a "clergyman," as his own father had been, a career that underscores his genuinely moral disposition (39). The tenant farmer wants to maintain or perhaps gain social position, and his success through humble but hard work offers him the financial means to help his son to greater advantage.

Meanwhile, Tyrrel resents the farmer's modest hopes as pretentious overstepping, as personal affront, and as an imprudent breach of the "practices of this country allow a dependent to assume" (41). The words "dependent" and "practices" do not refer to legal codes but rather to the socioeconomic patronage and deference system. Hawkins in fact naively believes that the law, symbolized by his precious rental contract, will protect the liberty to his livelihood: "I have got a lease of my farm … I hope there is some law for rich folk, as well as for poor ones." Tyrrel scoffs. No mere, formal legal code can surmount the more ubiquitous, informal tradition of the patronage system or its supportive ideology

of paternalism: "A pretty pass things are come to, if a lease can protect such fellows as you against the lord of a manor." Tyrrel is correct. He has the fiscal means to stall the legal system, and the implicit collusion of his fellow gentry who occupy all judiciary seats. No fellow gentleman will prosecute his peer. Godwin calls attention to injustice as maldistribution through socioeconomic custom not directly enforced by legal codes precisely because the squires surrounding Hawkins routinely break or skirt the law; the "general policy of land owners … restrain[ed] … acts of open defiance" (41). That policy is one of violence, eviction, and conspiracy.

Tyrrel uses covert and overt means to uncompromisingly and omnipotently destroy Hawkins by depriving him of every possible resource of survival and recourse of law. He first "engrosses" himself in deprivations of sustenance, livelihood, and safety. Tyrrel "deprived" Hawkins "of his appointment of bailiff," commanded his servants to "do [Hawkins] ill offices upon all occasions," "laid the whole" of Hawkins's "harvest" "under water," pulled "away the fences" "to turn in his cattle to the utter destruction of the crop," poisoned Hawkins's "live stock," and closed off the "private road" "so as to make Hawkins a sort of prisoner in his own domains" (42-43). The cattle killing drives Hawkins to legal action. He little hopes for a favorable judgment, but he also reasons that the annihilation of livestock "was so atrocious as to make it impossible that any rank could protect the culprit against the severity of justice" (42). Through the first-person narration of Caleb, Godwin interprets for

the reader how things really are: "Wealth and despotism easily know how to engage those laws, which were perhaps at first intended [witless and miserable precaution!] for the safeguards of the poor, as the coadjutors of their oppression" (41-42). Indeed, Tyrrel turns to "affidavits, motions, pleas, demurrers, flaws and appeals" to protract the case in order to "reduce" Hawkins "to beggary" (43). Godwin thus displays the disparity between the inferior's small infractions in contrast to the superiors' ferocious reactions that manifest as injustices of maldistribution. The English village he portrays is founded on radically unequal power relations which the humble man or woman has no opportunity to change. To avoid further destitution, even death, the Hawkins family absconds. Their escape serves plot and theme by allowing Godwin to place the terminal act of bloodshed of Hawkins and his cherished son upon the hands and conscience of the fourth and final despotic squire, Ferdinando Falkland. Falkland allows the Hawkins men to hang for the murder of Tyrrel that he himself commits. This event is the definitive verification of the paternalistic power that circumvents the letter of the law to the detriment of the inferior. The presumed veracity, morality, and charity of the empowered social actor is so pervasive that the law slaughters innocents upon the honorable word of the socially dominant man of rank and fortune. Like Emily, the Hawkins pursuit of liberty and a modicum of self-determination results in death.

Godwin visibly displays valuable socioeconomic resources and relies on plot to figure a pattern of human misery bound to patronage and paternalism.

The resource of employment exhibits in several forms, from tenant farmer, huntsman, bailiff, clergyman, to an array of domestic service positions. Basic subsistence resources appear across the entire landscape in the crops of corn and the game, the river and the dam, the livestock and the fields, the fences and the roads. The rich detail of the agriculturally productive countryside suggests an abundance and ampleness of resources. As a tenant farmer, much of these resources are quite literally the fruits of Hawkins's labor. Perhaps this is Godwin's ironic suggestion when he paints a contrasting topographical picture of Hawkins entrapped and enclosed on all sides on his small farm. This topographical entrapment pictorially replicates the socioeconomic limits enforced by the dubious collaboration between the squires of the community.

Godwin never forgets the human element that actualizes paternalistic ideology which he conveys through the cause-and-effect of plot: the human "cause" of plot is always a powerful and unethical social actor, and the human "effect" of plot is the boundless human misery of his victim. If rigid, the related system of patronage and deference is also not a formal legal institution. The law as written does not obligate inferiors to accept the dictates of more powerful social members, and English men,[19] even of the lower orders, were not legally prohibited from socioeconomic advancement. Indeed, Hawkins's hope to advance his son points to this possibility as one that informs his work ethic in echo of the credo of liberty imagined in English national consciousness.

[19] If not women so much.

Unfortunately, that credo is only imaginary. The squires enclosing Hawkins routinely circumvent formal law: the "general policy of land owners … restrain[ed] … acts of open defiance" by their subordinates (41). That policy is one of literal enclosure and eviction and figurative foreclosure and conspiracy. By conspiracy, I do not refer to the collection of individually motivated acts of violence against Hawkins, although these separate actions effectively collude in his destruction. Rather, I refer to Godwin's exhibition of the plotting that transpires in sequestered conversations strictly between "gentlemen."[20] Squire Underwood, for instance, privately admonishes Mr. Tyrrel for offering Hawkins a tenancy. He argues that this "proceeding" is "contrary to the understood conventions of the country gentlemen" and "an end to all regulation, if tenants were to be encouraged in such inexcusable disobedience" (37). The "disobedience" to which Underwood refers is Hawkins's independent vote. Hawkins's singular assertion of his legal right, if "established into a practice" would threaten the gentry's "power of managing any election." The invisible act of power-management is Godwin's subject here. Empowered figures maintain their strength by counterfeit elections that offer modest property owners an illusion of liberty; to be more precise, empowered figures *almost* offer that illusion. By "understood convention," they "mandate" the votes of their subordinates. Gentlemen manage elections for political control, but only by managing subordinates through either the distribution or denial of more basic

[20] At least, in the case of the Hawkins plot. In the plot against Emily, the private conspiracy is one between men who are socially unequal, Tyrrel and Grimes.

resources first. Constant threats to survival motivate most men to acquiesce their vote and other liberties to avoid misery. These benevolent gentlemen, by "understood convention," "regulate" social inferiors by calculated and coordinated management of indispensable resources to keep the lower orders "under" "subordination" and to foreclose their greater economic, moral, and civic independence (38). The enclosure of Hawkins thus figures the foreclosure of liberty.

Godwin visibly sets *Caleb Williams* within the socioeconomic conditions of the late-eighteenth century, and he highlights the themes of deprivation, displacement, and social disintegration through the topography of enclosure. The Hawkins plot most directly connects the shared theme of displacement between Godwin's *Caleb Williams* and the British Enclosure Acts that wrested communal lands from the peasantry. Wendy McElroy explains how "the peasantry had traditional and collective rights of access in order to pasture animals, harvest meadow grass, fish, collect firewood, or otherwise benefit. Rural laborers who lived on the margin depended on open fields and the wastes to fend off starvation" (1). The Enclosure Acts "displaced" villagers of their traditional access to communal property to make that land available for private purchase by wealthy men, demonstrating how a growing capitalist economy does not necessarily improve the condition of the poor under villeinage. Godwin perhaps echoes Goldsmith's poem, the "The Deserted Village," here in his troubled outlook during a transitional time between feudal paternalism and

expanding capitalism. When Goldsmith refers to the land as "parent," he alludes to paternalistic reciprocity. The peasantry of the village, in "contented toil," congenially labor for their trusted patron who betrays their trust and his social responsibility to preserve their liberal access to the community pastures upon which their survival depends. The speaker of "The Deserted Village" sympathizes with the disabused and displaced peasantry, but the nostalgic disposition of this text is, in the end, stagnant. The text progressively calls for the "redress" of wrongs but imagines that "redress" as the impossible reversal of time before trade and colonialism and conservatively by a return to an idealized agrarian paternalism. "The Deserted Village" is social commentary on historical land enclosure, figured as oppressive land-grabbing by the rising mercantile class, who turn to ruin the productive landscape, and who overturn agrarian paternalism.

Goldsmith's nostalgic pastoralism resonates in Godwin's similar pastoral iconography of fruitful farms, humble occupations, modest cottages, innocent sports, virginal puppy-love, and "sturdy" peasants (38). However, Godwin invokes the intrinsic nostalgia of these images and the topography of enclosure for more satirical and realistic social commentary. Godwin and Goldsmith share an undeniable kinship in their compassion for human suffering. But while Goldsmith idealizes a ruined agrarian economy and paternalist ethic, Godwin dismantles the artifice of that ethic. He does so by contrasting empowered characters' speeches on paternalistic benevolence to their hypocritical actions

and via plethoric plot parallelism to display the unremitting ruthlessness of Marlow, Underwood, Tyrrel, and Falkland, and the evil ingenuity in their manners of violence. The squires who oppress Hawkins, Caleb, and Emily wield the formidable rights and privileges of propagation, property, patronage, and political participation. By contrast, the humble characters claim the altogether more modest rights of survival, gainful employment, familial love, and safety from violence. Far from an idyllic village life built upon reciprocal paternalistic cooperation, the lives of the farmer, servant, and female dependent are rife with terror and the real dangers of economic displacement, bodily defilement, moral devastation, and corporal death. The controlling feature of Godwin's setting is the intrinsically unequal "extra-institutional" doctrine of paternalism manifested in the informal institution of the patronage system replete with its coercive power and obligations of deference. Maldistributive injustice is not just the defilement of the body, the deprivation of sustenance, the displacement of workers, the devastation of the fruits of labor, the destabilization of the family, or even the denial of civic participation. Maldistributive injustice is encoded in the paternalistic framework that creates the conditions within which dominant social actors can habitually exploit their subordinates in the first place.

Like current scholars of social injustice, Cugoano, Wollstonecraft, and Godwin understand the mutually reinforcing way in which injustice in the realm of exclusionary representation supplements injustice in the realm of resource maldistribution. Indeed, Rawls suggests that "self-respect" is integrally

intertwined with social institutions since it is "the recognition of social institutions" that empowers individuals with "a sense of self-worth" to confidently assert their ideas, hopes, and goals within their social realms (59). The writers of this study would agree. In response, all three authors complement their arguments against identity-deprecating discourses with protests against the unfair denial of the valuable resources of society. They argue that not only are all persons capable of reasonable and moral decisions, but all persons are equally deserving of the opportunities of liberty and other "primary goods," like "freedom of movement," "income and wealth," that would empower them to be cooperative citizens (Rawls 58-60). Maldistributive injustice scrutinizes the systems by which communities allocate resources, commodities, and goods among members and how fairly that society apportions its limited resources. Wollstonecraft, Cugoano, and Godwin collectively object to various forms of injustice as maldistribution not limited to purely economic commodities. They address inadequacies such as lack of subsistence, inaccessibility to professions, barriers from education and moral tutelage, and debarment from political enfranchisement. They also protest the "great wrongs" and "grievous injustices" routinely suffered by women, workers, and slaves caused by unequal power dynamics between the sexes, within the family, in professional and labor relations, and through the international slave economy (Bufacchi 7). Just these two brief catalogues reveal a range of resources the writers pinpoint which traverse across the realms of economy, civic participation, subsistence, and even

moral development. Resources, as the authors comprehend them, consist of a great deal more than solely subsistence needs or economic opportunity. All three authors in fact anticipate the work of current scholars, like Bufacchi, Rawls, and Sen, who also understand resources in broad terms of economic, cultural, and social goods and opportunities. Thus, the authors identify the stratal, adroit, and versatile composition of social injustice as maldistribution. They dispute maldistributive injustice and the always life- altering and often life-threatening consequences of denied resources.

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